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MORE ADVENTURES
IN KILT AND KHAKI.

By the Same Author.

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SKETCHES OF
THE GLASGOW HIGHLANDERS
AND OTHERS IN FRANCE.

BY
THOMAS M. LYON
("PRIVATE LEO").

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Dedication.

To the Memory of all those good fellows (your pals and mine) who, for love of country, have paid the Price above all others: and to the innumerable legion of brave, loyal-hearted women—Wives, Mothers, Sisters, Sweethearts, Friends—who, having given their best and dearest to the great fight for Liberty, Wait and Watch and Work and Pray—in Blighty, now.

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Author's Foreword.

A majority of the following sketches appeared originally in the columns of "The Kilmarnock Standard," to the editor and proprietors of which journal I am indebted for permission to republish them; the remaining sketches are printed here for the first time.

The book does not purport to be a detailed chronicle of the doings of the Glasgow Highlanders: it should be regarded rather as an album of random literary snap-shots portraying certain isolated incidents of life and work in the trenches and behind the lines in France, and a few of the particular individuals with whom I have been associated there. The time covered ranges from June 1915, to September 1916, being the term of the writer's service in France, and with one or two exceptions all the sketches were written at intervals extending over that period.

If these sketches serve to convey to my readers something of the strangely varied atmosphere—a mingling of tragedy and comedy, humour and pathos, excitement and dreary monotony—in which the soldier lives and works in France, I have achieved my aim in writing them.

T. M. L.

June, 1917.

More Adventures
In Kilt and Khaki.

THE EVENING "STAND-TO."

"Rations are up!"

The words were passed along the line.

In one of the bays of the trench the Orderly Corporal had spread a waterproof ground-sheet upon the firing-step, and upon this was dividing and arranging the day's rations into separate portions—one for each mess of four.

"Wha's been playin' at fitba' wi' the breid?" asked Erchie. "Or is thae the loafs that wis left ower frae the Boer War? They've got gran' beards on them, onyway."

The loaves were much broken and dirtied from the rough usage they had received ere reaching the firing-line, and on their surfaces was a quantity of fine hair gathered from the sandbags in which they had been carried. The cheese had a similar downy appearance.

"One tin of butter between two messes to-night," said the Corporal, "and Ticklers for everybody."

Erchie groaned as he surveyed a jam tin. "Turnip jam again, labelled and libelled 'plum an' aipple!' Whenny we to get strawberry jam again, Corporal? It's nearly a fortnicht since we had it last, an', man, ah can fecht faur better on strawberry jam than on this dagont glue. A wee tate o' strawberry jam, an' ah'm a raig'ler deevil."

An orderly broke in, "Here, Archie, you'll have to get a transport section of your own. My back's nearly broken humping two big parcels of yours up the trench. Judging by their weight there must be bullion in them."

"Na, na, that'll juist be some scones o' ma sister's bakin'. They're aye terrible wechty proposeetions."

The mail was distributed, and thereafter I helped Erchie to carry our mess's share of it and of the rations to a dugout.

Pudd'n and Gussie lay outstretched on the sandbags that covered the floor of our circumscribed abode, and Erchie tumbled in through the narrow doorway so precipitously that he accidentally trod on Gussie's hand.

Gussie sat up. "Oh, I say, old chep," he Kelvinsighed, "I don't mind you treading on

my hand—I don't really—but you might, please, not loiter on it!"

"Pardonnay-mwaw!" said Erchie, "an' here's bokoo letters fur ye—a percel fur Pudd'n—three letters fur Leo—d'ye pey folk to write to ye?—an' twa percels fur me. Wur awfy popular sweds the nicht."

In his exuberance of spirits he began to execute a step-dance, thereby gravely disarranging the sandbags spread over the floor, while he sang—

"Ashes to ashes and dust to dust,
If it werena for the Glasgows
The Empire 'ud be bust;
Allemands may come, Allemands may go,
But where the deuce they go to
I dunno . . .
Tum-ta-tum-tum—Pom-pom!"

He essayed a final fling at the last note, whereupon his head struck the interlaced branches and twigs that formed the ceiling, and brought down a shower of earth upon us.

Pudd'n expressed his rage with much art, and then he and I, taking up our mess-tins, passed along the trench to draw tea for the mess. An orderly presided over the dixy, and when one had been served with tea he had to crush his way past the other men lined up in the trench

waiting their turn—taking care not to spill any of the priceless fluid in the process.

Erchie was examining the contents of his parcels when we returned to the dugout.

"Scones, pancakes, gingerbreids, an' lice-killer," he announced. "We'll juist have some o' them a' toot sweet; an' the sausages we'll lea' to the morn's mornin' when we hae time to fry them. Noo for a bong mongzhay!"

We were in the middle of our meal when the Platoon Sergeant's voice was heard in the trench.

"Comin', Sergeant," shouted Pudd'n, scrambling to his feet.

The Sergeant thrust his head through the doorway.

"All right!" he said. "Finish your grub! You—and you—and you"—he indicated Gussie, Pudd'n, and myself—"are detailed for a listening post to-night. You'll go over immediately after stand-to."

The Sergeant disappeared.

"Serves ye richt fur jinin'," said Erchie cheerily. "Tak' ane o' thae scones in yer pouch for self-defence in case ony o' thae German blighters see ye. A hame-made scone that's been on the road for a week is mair deidly than a bomb ony day."

. . . . . .

Dusk was falling when the order "Stand-to!" was passed along the trench. From every dugout men tumbled forth, and, having buckled on their equipment and fixed bayonets, took their places upon the firing-step, rifle in hand.

Peering over the edge of the parapet one looked directly upon that amazingly complex structure of wooden posts and thin tangled steel that was our barbed wire fortification. Beyond, and terminating in a ridge that serrated the sky-line perhaps three hundred yards away, stretched a plain covered with lank, sickly-yellow grass. Here and there were dark showings of earth, indicative of shell holes: a little to our left a row of bushes, planted at distant and irregular intervals, extended in a straight line from our trenches, being all that survived of what had lately been a compact hedge: at one point a slight, jagged projection of red brick above the earth's surface and an adjacent mound of building stuffs served as monument of a former home. About two hundred yards away, at the foot of the ridge, there was faintly discernible a whitish streak which stretched to right and left for a great distance ere it faded into the grey mirk of evening, and this we knew for the parapet of the enemy's lines.

Ping-g-g !—S-s-s-s !—An occasional bullet sang over our heads, and there was the intermittent *crack ! crack !* of rifles along our lines as our men responded. All evening the ordinary sounds of the trench had been punctuated by a series of dull roars emanating from a point about half a mile to our right, and now each such outburst was heralded by a sudden fierce lightening of the darkness in the south.

" Gled they're no chuckin' ony trench mortar bombs ower here," said Pudd'n, as he stood on tiptoe and craned to see where the bombs were landing ; " they're no stricken bon !"

Even as he spoke the faint crackle of distant " rapid firing " was heard ; it gained in intensity until it was as one sustained note of sound, fluctuating but slightly : it grew louder—nearer —louder still : we levelled our rifles on top of the parapet in readiness : the machine gun in the next bay sputtered for a few seconds—was silent —sputtered again.

A dark figure appeared below and behind us —leapt up on to the firing-step between Erchie and Gussie. " Let's give 'em fits," said he, and opened fire.

" Righto, Corporal !" said Gussie, and his rifle spat flame and death.

For five minutes or so we pumped a rapid succession of bullets into the darkness ahead, taking rough aim at the spot where we judged the German front line to be; our arms ached with the effort of jerking the bolt to and fro, and an inexplicable, wild excitement was upon us. The battalion stationed on our left had also caught the fever and had joined in the rapid fire—and battalions beyond that too; perhaps the fever and the crackling sound reached to the sea. A few bullets whistled over us, but the enemy was not responding to our overtures in any great measure. Now the darkness was suddenly dispelled as a number of flares soared upward from the German lines, making the night a ghastly whiteness. Then——

"Cease fire, you fellows! Who the devil told you to open a 'rapid'?"

An officer was speaking from the trench behind us, and at his word we desisted and passed the command "Cease fire!" along to the next bay. The crackle faded gradually into the Northern distance.

Said Pudd'n, "The Allemands have got the wind up now, sure. Dekko (look at) a' thae flares!"

The Lance-Corporal drew back the bolt of his rifle, inserted a fresh clip of cartridges, jammed them home, and closed the cut-off.

"Wouldn't be surprised," said he, "if the blighters retaliate. We'll be having 'bokoo' shells over here before long. Funny that they haven't——"

His rifle slipped from his fingers and clattered to the ground: his body suddenly crumpled up, and, falling backwards, struck the parados and thence slid down and into the trench.

Gussie leapt down from the firing-step.

"Stretcher-bearers to the right!" he roared. Then, "Here, give's a hand to lift him up, somebody!"

But what he saw by the light of a flare sickened him.

We laid the body on the firing-step and covered the upper part with a waterproof sheet.

. . . . . .

The air was hideous with the scream of bullets. They skimmed over the parapet—just above our heads—and—*sput, sput, sput!*—plugged into the sandbags. The Germans were returning past favours, and had opened a "rapid fire" on us. Our machine guns raked the enemy's parapet, and Pudd'n and a few other daring spirits occasionally tried a hasty shot at the flame-spitting line of the opposing trenches, but most of us were content to let the shower of

lead pass over ere we exposed the smallest part of ourselves in the upper air.

After a few minutes the noise of firing subsided, and soon there was a stillness such that one could hear the upward rush of the Germans' star rockets.

The Platoon Sergeant appeared.

"Where are the men detailed for the listening-post? Oh, you're here! Stand by in readiness to go over—it won't be for a wee while yet—give the Allemands time to quieten down after the little 'hurroosh!' I'll give you the wire (I'll advise you) when you're to go."

A few minutes later—"Stand-to's off!"—the words passed from mouth to mouth along the trench. Those of the men not detailed for look-out duty jumped down from the firing-step and crawled into their dugouts—to be rooted out within quarter of an hour to fill sandbags and repair the parapet.

But Gussie, Pudd'n, and I, being under orders to go on a listening-post, spent the time of waiting in an endeavour to warm our chilled hands over the flame of the single candle that we possessed.

THE LISTENING-POST.

We were six privates and a Corporal, and, having received our final instructions, the moment had come when we should "go over."

It had been arranged that three men should be at the listening-post, the other three to remain in reserve in the trench to receive communications. Midway during the seven hours that yet remained until dawn the parties would exchange places.

A method of signalling had been devised. A stout length of twine would extend from the listening-post to the trench, where it would be attached to an old jam tin containing a pebble. One tug at the cord would signify that one member or more of the listening-post was retreating towards the trench—possibly to give an alarm. Two tugs would indicate that a member of the party in the trench was wanted to visit the listening-post—it might be to receive a message. Three tugs would signify "All's well." The line would also serve to guide parties direct to and from the listening-post.

Pudd'n, Gussie, and I had elected to go first on duty, the Corporal to accompany us until we were securely settled. I was deputed to carry the twine and pay it out as we advanced; and attached to Pudd'n's waist was a bomb-carrier containing several Mills bombs to be used in case of emergency.

"Over ye go, an' the best o' luck!" said Erchie, who was on look-out duty in the trench bay in which we were gathered; "an' mind ye dinna jougle thae bombs ower much. Ah wadna like to see you an' Gussie gettin' too sudden a rise in the worl'."

A flare sank to the ground and died out, and there was intense darkness.

"Now's our time, boys!" said the Corporal. "Up with you!"

One after another we laid our rifles on top of the parapet and leapt and scrambled up.

"This way!" said the Corporal, "and keep down"—and was off into the darkness of "No Man's Land." Stooping low we followed in single file. Southward a flare brightened the sky, and in the feeble light it cast around us we paused irresolute and crouched lower.

"Come on, boys," sounded in low accents from the Corporal; "we can't stop for the like of that."

And from behind came a fierce whisper of encouragement from Erchie, "Gawn, chaps! that's naething—only an Allemand lightin' a spunk!"

Pudd'n snorted a suppressed laugh, and the Corporal emitted a peremptory "S-sh!"

We reached our barbed wire entanglement, and started on the slow and difficult task of crossing it noiselessly. Our kilts were bothersome, and one had no sooner freed them from the clinging wire at one place than they had formed a strong attachment at another; and, despite our utmost care, the wires jangled at moments in a manner that sounded alarming to our nervous ears.

"Ah'm scartit fae heid to fit," whispered Pudd'n once, as I strove to disentangle his buff apron from three separate strands of wire; "it's a stricken good job there's no a machine gun——"

"Down!" The word broke simultaneously from three pairs of lips.

A star rocket soared upward from the German lines and burst into light. In the fierce white glare all the world about us was made hideously distinct, and amid the wires we crouched low and motionless. When darkness had again plunged down on us we did not move

or speak for perhaps a half minute, then with one accord each rose and strove to fight his way through the remainder of the entanglement.

At last we stood on the side farther from our lines, and moved forward in close succession, the Corporal — who led the way — whispering warning of any irregularity in the earth's surface or other impediment likely to trip unwary feet. Suddenly I heard immediately behind me the appalling rattle of a tin can, followed by a muffled gasp from Pudd'n and a heavy thud.

"Halt, you two in front!" I whispered, and turning, "What's up, Pudd'n? Where are you?"

I found him sitting on the ground trying to extricate his legs from a contrivance formed of two or three hoops of barbed wire fastened together crosswise, and with a tin can attached. He had inadvertently strayed a little to the right of the path we were following, and had stumbled into the ball of wire designed to warn us of the approach of any Germans to our fortifications and to impede their advance. I helped to free him from the encumbrance, and we moved forward again.

When we were perhaps seventy yards in front of our own lines and about twice as many from the enemy's, the Corporal halted.

"There's an old sap a little to the right—over there," he whispered.

But Pudd'n broke in hoarsely, "Oh, Crickey! don't go there. It's fu' o' rats. I was on a listenin'-post there afore, an' we wur nearly ett up."

"That's what I was going to say," continued the Corporal. "I think we should stay here, or look for a good shell hole."

"Me for the shell hole!" said Gussie.

We advanced again, choosing our steps with the utmost care, yet the swish of the grass as we moved our feet seemed as loud as the noise of mighty running waters; and to one at least—whose first experience this was of straying in No Man's Land—the palpitation of his heart seemed as the tattoo of many drums. The nervous suspense was intense.

Pop! and a spluttering spark trailed into the sky—we threw ourselves forward full length on the grass—and again a fierce white light beat down upon us and upon all the earth around.

Crack! Crack! Crack! The distant sounds of desultory rifle fire were audible to our straining senses: there was a rustling in the grass near us, and a squeaking that was as a world-filling din. Gussie essayed to shift a part of his equipment on which he had been lying, and the Corporal said "S-sh!" sharply and irritably.

Pop! pop! Two more flares made night into ghastly day, and ere the grateful darkness had come again a machine gun rattled, and for a second or two the air hissed with the flight of bullets.

"Allemands!" gasped Pudd'n. "D'ye think they've seen us?"

But no one answered, and again the faint cracking of distant rifle fire was the only sound in the world.

After a minute or so of this tense, breathless silence Gussie spoke, his mouth close to my ear: "The Corporal thinks we're safe to move now. There's a shell hole about fifteen yards ahead, and we'll move up to it on all fours—one after another. Corporal's going first—then me—then you—then Pudd'n. Pass it on to him!"

I advised Pudd'n of the arrangement, and a minute later was crawling on hands and knees towards the shell hole, paying out the communication cord as I went. A rim of upturned earth surrounded the hole, and as I clambered over this someone caught me by the wrist and whispered, "Be careful what you're doing. The sides are very steep, and there's water at the foot of the hole."

"Righto, Gussie!" I whispered back, and thereupon proceeded to slide down—down—

down the crumbling bank. When Pudd'n joined us a minute later I had only just succeeded in securing myself in a stable position at the inner edge of the pit.

. . . . . .

The Corporal slunk off into the darkness, and a little later three distinct tugs at the communication cord apprised us that he had reached the shelter of the trench and that all was well. For some time after that we lay motionless and silent, our eyes peering over the edge of the shell hole and taking advantage of every flare that served to make the German trenches visible. The distant boom of cannon and of bursting bombs was audible, and the thin squealing of rats was all around us. Occasionally two red specks of light glowed balefully out of the darkness within a few inches of one's face, and if one did but blow or make a slight movement of the head the eyes vanished to the accompaniment of the rustling of grass and a further squeaking.

It was Pudd'n who first spoke. "O Goad!" he breathed, as he shifted his leg, "thae rats are makin' a feed aff me. There's yin o' them tryin' to snaffle ma puttee, wi' ma leg in't an' a'. Strafe them!"

"S-sh! Do you hear that!" said Gussie.

We listened intently for perhaps a minute, straining to catch the slightest unusual sound. My ears detected nothing, and I was on the point of asking my companion what he thought he had heard, when—the sound of a voice raised in laughter reached me. And then I could recognise the occasional note of a man's voice—a mere indistinguishable word dropping out of the silence.

"Allemands for a pinch," muttered Gussie at last.

Our bodies cold and cramped, but with every sense alert, we waited while the minutes dree'd their weary length — and then a sudden, unaccustomed sound fell on our ears.

Rigid, tense, our heads uplifted slightly as in expectation, we waited, but the sound was not repeated.

"That was a wire rattlin'," said Pudd'n.

"A working party," said I.

"It explains the voices in the trench," said Gussie.

A flare started on its rainbow flight from the British trenches, and we raised ourselves a little and scanned the German lines.

"Ah see them," whispered Pudd'n excitedly —"juist ower there."

But Gussie and I confessed that we had distinguished no human forms. Pudd'n, however,

was positive, and we deemed it best to advise our comrades in the trench. Gussie tugged the communication cord and crept away. And soon, by the light of another flare, I saw—or thought I saw—a dark upstanding figure suddenly disappear—as a man would who assumed a crouching position, and I heard Pudd'n's voice, "Was ah no richt? Did ye see them that time? Allemands, fur a wager!"

The darkness now held something of terror. If some of the enemy—so near at hand—should sally forth unobserved and catch us unaware; if a German patrol should come upon us from the rear!

I felt Pudd'n move, and knew he was glancing backward—knew it because I was on the point of doing so myself.

Reassured, "Ah thocht ah heard something ahint," he whispered, "but it maun juist hae been a rat."

"Pudd'n," I replied, my lips touching his ear, "I can see more Allemands in the dark than the Kaiser ever saw at a review in the daytime."

Pudd'n emitted a ghost of a chuckle. "Aye, but bombs is nae guid fur makin' thae blighters 'ally.' Rum's the best thing fur gettin' yersel' rid o' them. Crickey! ah wish ah had a

wee tot the noo. Ah'm near foun'ert wi' the cauld."

Another long, tense silence, and again we heard the jangling of a wire; and there were further faint, unrecognisable sounds.

We were both suffering extreme discomfort now from cold and the stiffness that was the result of our strained physical position; we spoke infrequently.

But once Pudd'n whispered abruptly, "Whitty ye thinkin' aboot the noo?"

I laughed inwardly, and—"I was thinking I'd cheerfully sell my soul for a single pipeful of tobacco. . . . And you?"

Pudd'n hesitated; then—"Ah wis thinkin' aboot the tert," he affirmed more shyly than was his wont.

A pause: a sigh from Pudd'n, and a querulous whisper, more to himself than to me —"Crivens! ah wunner if her and me'll ever dauner again through Rouken Glen thegither!"

Another pause: then in a tone of infinite resignation, "It's a heluva war!"

The conversation expired, and was not resumed even when Gussie rejoined us.

It was shortly after this that a succession of flares went up from our trenches—possibly in an endeavour to intimidate or affright the German

working party. Then there was the rapid puff! puff! puff! of a machine gun and the song of flying bullets.

"Jumping Jehoshaphat!" muttered Gussie. "This isn't bon. I hope the blighters haven't forgotten we're here."

We cowered down into our shell hole, and Pudd'n had the misfortune to slide into the water at the foot, which reached to his knees. But the machine gun fire did not last long, and soon we resumed our old positions at the lip of the hole and waited—waited in an agony of discomfort—for the reliefs to come. At last the Corporal and another man arrived, and Gussie crept off towards the trenches, and in succession, as our reliefs arrived, Pudd'n and I followed.

For three hours more we sat huddled together in a bay in the front line, silent for the most part, smoking innumerable cigarettes to keep us awake, and acknowledging always the three tugs at the communication cord which advised us from time to time that all was well with our pals "out yonder." Then in due course they too appeared one after the other out of the darkness, and leapt down from the parapet on to the firing-step. Soon afterwards a faint pallor was discernible in the eastern sky, and a grey light crept over the world.

A sleepy-eyed young subaltern came shivering round a traverse.

"Stand-to, you men! Pass the word along."

Gussie drew aside the waterproof sheet hung over the entrance to a dugout, and, putting his head inside the aperture, shouted, "Turn out, boys! 'Stand-to' is on!"

I warned the men in the next bay.

Then, with the weariness of a sleepless, anxious night upon us, we took our places on the firing-step, and, listless, saw the morning skies blazon forth their ancient message of hope.

THREE WOMEN.

Eighteen months ago it was a pretty rural village, this unlovely expanse of wreckage just behind the firing-line. The jagged stone walls that rise, gaunt and perilous, from amidst the litter of building stuffs on the ground are all that remain of homes—homes that once were bright and warm with love and laughter.

Not a whole house stands. If here four walls remain, the roof has gone; if there a few slates still find a precarious support, one of the gables is missing. Nor is there any trace of the little gardens that were; the piles of debris and the derelict walls are surrounded by a wilderness of mud.

Hardly does the place afford a decent shelter for a dog, and troops cannot be billeted there. Occasionally you will find a few odd soldiers—the cooks, pioneers, etc., belonging to battalions in the trenches—herding together in the dug-outs that have been formed in sundry out-of-the-way corners, but that is all. Yet is Cambrin a busier place in its death than it was in life.

For from it a communication trench leads to the firing-line, and so there are always troops coming and going, and by day and by night fatigue parties are assembled there—perhaps to unload material required in the trenches, perhaps to carry it up to the firing-line. Periodically the enemy sends over a few shells on the off-chance of there being troops collected at this point, and so it is that the village has been reduced to a mere geological pancake on the earth's surface.

Of civilian life there is hardly a trace; all the former inhabitants have fled long ago, all save one.

"Granny" the men call her, and her grey hairs might justify the title—a little, wizened, bowed, old woman, with an uncertain, faltering step, and eyes dulled by looking over-long on life. On her arm she carries a basket containing two or three dozen small, green, hard pears, and these she sells to the men—three pears for two sous. She shuffles along the muddy road, picking her steps as carefully as she may, while British Tommies, perhaps enjoying a few minutes' freedom from a fatigue, hail her with a "Bon jour, Madame!" or "Hi, granny, donnay-mwaw some o' your peers!"

Sometimes the hiss of a shell startles the air overhead, and there will be a burst of shrapnel

perhaps only a hundred yards away, and Madame will pause and look around her, then shake her head and say to some prospective customer, "No bon! No bon!" and Tommy will reply, "Oui, oui, Madame, no bloomin' bon!"

When her basket has been emptied she totters along the muddy road to the end of the village, and there in the dugout or cellar—her storehouse and residence combined—excavated beneath the cottage that was once her home, she replenishes her stock of pears, and sets off again to the spot where her soldier customers are.

Many times I have seen her thus selling her humble wares amid the dismal scene of ruin that she knew but lately and for long years as a cheerful, pleasant village, a harbour of friends and familiar faces. And always thus has she seemed to me the very epitome of all sadness and solitariness and desolation.

. . . . . .

I am in luck, for Clémence is my friend.

If you could see this charming refugee from La Bassée you would understand. For Clémence has an air.

Tall—just elegantly tall for a woman—and deliciously rounded in form, Clémence is good to look upon; refreshing. Her features are

patrician in their regularity, her brown eyes are a-sparkle with the light of youth, the cunning waviness of her dark hair is a tantalising delight, and when she smiles her teeth gleam like snow in a setting of red roses. When Clémence laughs you are reminded of the song of little rivers or of the dulcet tones of a harp or of anything else that is soft and restrained and sweetly musical. And she has to laugh very often when I speak to her—not at my wit, truly, but at my execrable French. But it is well worth while making blunders just to hear Clémence laugh and to hear her, in her pretty French, correct one's errors.

When she does not call me "Tum" she calls me "M'sieu le Curé," because she thinks no one could read or write so much in his leisure time except a Curé, and indeed at an early stage of our friendship she asked me if I was going to be a "Curé Ecossais." And when I laughed at that she began to laugh too, so I continued laughing softly that I might have the pleasure of hearing *her* laugh.

A laughing friend is a good thing to have at all times, especially if she be two-and-twenty, pretty, and laughs sweetly; but Clémence is more than that. She volunteered once to wash and mend my underclothes, and when I hesitated

to comply with her request—for a washing tub does not seem a fitting background for a young goddess — she insisted. And when Clémence insists——

Well, anyhow, she is now my self-constituted laundress when the battalion is stationed in the town of Beuvry. I find myself almost tempted to make holes purposely in my socks, for Clémence darns so nicely; but I don't, for that were to take advantage of her good nature.

The first time that Clémence thus played the role of laundress to me I offered to pay her for her labour, and it was only when I saw her pretty air of indignation and offence that I realised what a *faux pas* I had made, and apologised as best I could. She was my friend, so she told me, and one does not pay one's friend for favours done: the gladness of the doing is recompense enough. And, besides, her two brothers were at the war, and her fiancé also, and when she performed a little service for a Scottish soldier, she felt somehow that she was helping them too; and she hoped that they did not lack friends who would add in little ways to their comfort.

But the mere washing and mending of my linen does not constitute the sum of Clémence's kindness to me. In the mornings she has hot

water ready for me for shaving purposes, and in the evenings—ah! in the evenings I go to sit in the little kitchen at the back of the house. Clémence's grandfather and grandmother sit in great chairs, one on each side of the stove; Clémence sits at one side of the table—knitting, knitting, always knitting for those dear ones of hers who are at the war, and laughing and talking in bright fashion to me who sits at the other end of the table eating with the utmost relish the delicious "salade" that she has made, and drinking numerous little bowlsful of *café au lait*.

We talk on all manner of subjects—I very haltingly, she very vivaciously—and when I entreat her to speak more slowly she mimics me and appeals to her *grande-mère* to say if she is talking too fast. The old folks, a smile on their homely faces, sit listening to every word, obviously enjoying the irresponsible chatter. And sometimes when Clémence talks of Paris, which she has visited several times, *grand-père* will join in the conversation, for he has been there also, though many, many years ago. At some time or other during the evening too he is pretty certain to talk to me of Marie Stuart, of whose history he appears to know much more than I do.

When nine o'clock comes I repair to my "bedroom"—which is the *salon* or drawing-room of the house—while Clémence and her grandparents retire to the murky depths of the cellar. For Beuvry is distant but a few kilometres from the firing-line, and every other day the Germans send over a few shells into it—and every other day a few harmless civilians, or it may be some soldiers billeted in the town, are killed or wounded. And so the inhabitants have perforce, for safety's sake, to hide in their cellars at night, and thither they hurry also during the day when a bombardment begins. As for me "dossin' it out in the drorin'-room"—why, that happens to be the Orderly Room of our battalion, and my duty compels me to be there by night as well as by day, so I snuggle up in my blanket in a corner of the bare room and try to look as pleasant as possible when some incoming messenger awakens me from my slumber—which, unfortunately, happens very frequently during the night.

I have written of Clémence because I want you to know that the young women of France are *not* all represented in the types of French femininity that you find portrayed in comedies on the stage. They have qualities as fine as have their British sisters, and their attractive-

ness is as great. *Ca va sans dire!* The war is terrible to them in its reality; yet, despite their suffering and suspense—suspense for the safety of loved ones in the firing-line—they can still smile and laugh, with the laughter of perfect faith in the end. They are going to win—they know it, for they have made up their minds to win, and so the heart must fain be merry at times. But always, always there is a solemn undercurrent even in their laughter.

If you heard Clémence speak of her mother you would understand many things; for instance, you would perhaps appreciate a little the depth of veneration—or should it rather be the height of worship?—in which "*ma mère*" is held in France. Clémence's mother is—no one exactly knows where: but somewhere on the other side of the firing-line—in the territory now in German hands. And since that date, many months ago, when the German hordes overswept this fair land, Clémence has heard from her mother but once, and that was in the Spring of 1915.

Perhaps you can understand her anxiety; perhaps you can appreciate the moistness that dims her eyes when she speaks of "*Maman.*"

Yet Clémence is my laughing friend, as good, moreover, as she is pretty and bright.

. . . . . .

The last of my "three women" is Renée—the elf of the sunlit hair and with the blue of heaven in her big wondering eyes.

I am staying in the home of Renée as I write—the front kitchen is for the time being our Orderly Room. And not half-an-hour ago she came to me and held up her two Cupid's lips to receive a good-night kiss, and said, "*Au revoir: à demain!*" so quaintly and prettily that I could have kissed her again; but she was gone, blowing kisses to me as she went.

For Renée is two years and two months old, and is one of the sweetest little bundles of humanity that one could hope to meet. Within an hour of my entering her house she asked me if I was her papa, and when I answered (somewhat regretfully) in the negative, she confided to me very gravely that her papa was a soldier at the war; and was I a soldier too?

Renée is a true daughter of France, fearless of heart and the daintiest and most charming of coquettes.

Shall I tell you something? . . . She has made a conquest—and of whom? None other than he before whose eye a whole battalion quails, whose voice strikes awe to the stoutest hearts and lends speed to the most tired legs—none other than the regimental Sergeant-

Major. For in her presence all his stern military manner drops from him, and he becomes an extraordinarily human being with a liking for kiddies and a *penchant* for playing with them. If you saw him bouncing her in the air, she screaming with delight and crying "Encore, encore!" every time he desisted, you would doubt the evidence of your eyes, and conclude that this must be a twin brother of the S.-M., with none of the latter's on-parade sternness in his composition, but with a certain light-hearted irresponsibility in its place.

When he is busy over his papers Renée will enter the Orderly Room and climb upon his knee, will pull his moustache, and finger and examine intently the brass buttons on his tunic and the ribbon decorations on his breast, chattering volubly the while in baby French which we don't understand, though we know well enough what is in her little heart. Or she will force on the S.-M.'s attention a particularly battered old rag doll, which has one arm missing, and insist that it go to sleep on the table among his papers. And the S.-M. prepares a bed for it and covers it with blankets of pink blotting paper, and croons a lullaby over it—all to the ecstatic delight of Renée. Then her mother, a quiet-mannered, pleasant young woman, will beguile her to another

room, and warn her not to disturb the soldiers in their multitudinous *affaires*. But in a little while Renée is back again, blythe and affable and prattling as ever.

I wonder if, in after years, Renée will remember that strange phase of her childhood when her home was partly given over to foreign soldiers, when men in outlandish uniforms and speaking an unknown tongue were her daily companions, when she played and made holiday with them while Daddy was at the war.

Probably not, for Renée is but a baby; but the French children of a few years' older growth will in the time to come have strange recollections of their childhood.

PRIVATE TOMPSON—HERO.

Tompson isn't a bit like other heroes—if the information published in the halfpenny dailies concerning these fine fellows is to be trusted. Tompson isn't the support of a widowed mother and her umpteen younger children—I couldn't imagine him supporting anything except, maybe, the counter of an estaminet: and Tompson's friends did not regard him from earliest infancy as a boy likely to perform noble and heroic deeds when he grew up. Neither is Tompson a "strong, silent man":—from "Reveillé" to "Lights Out" his tongue hardly rests for a moment, and his conversation is for the most part unmitigated nonsense. So you see, he is quite unlike any other hero you ever read about.

Before the war Tompson attended classes (sometimes) at Glasgow University, and when he enlisted he designated himself on the attestation form as "an Arts student": I really don't know why, for I can conceive of no subject that Tompson is ever less likely to study than the Arts.

I asked Tompson one day what profession he purposed to adopt after finishing his College course,

and was told that he was uncertain yet whether he'd be a minister or a bookmaker on the turf.

"But it takes a lot of brains to make an accurate book—to keep it always on the right side," he added: "so maybe I'll just have to feel myself 'called to the ministry.'"

That's the sort of silly, irresponsible thing that Tompson is always saying.

During our preliminary training in Glasgow Tompson's voice was invariably raised above all others in those songs with which we used to inspire ourselves as we swung through the city streets: and he always introduced absurd variations at those passages which called for simple, dignified treatment, and ejaculated a loud "pom! pom!" or emitted a weird cat-call whenever there was a slight pause in the music or a sustained note.

Every male civilian that we passed—irrespective of age—Tompson insulted cheerfully by asking "What man's job have you pinched, slacker?" or by singing,

> "Though we'll fight best without you,
> Still, we think you ought to come."

If any girl appeared in sight within a radius of three hundred yards he rent the air with shouts of "Coo-ee, Bella!" or "Hullo, Lizzie!" and waved his arms in extravagant gestures of

greeting and blew smacking kisses to her: while ladies close by he invited to come and hold his hand as he was afraid of the horrid Germans. And such was the temper of the people in those days that they smiled at and seemed to enjoy Tompson's buffoonery, and the girls reciprocated his make-believe windy kisses and laughed delightedly at his impertinences—or looked demure and embarrassed and characterised him inwardly as "an awful boy!"

But those men of mild manners and quiet habits of mind who had to march beside Tompson could willingly have strafed him, because of the unwelcome attentions of officers and N.C.O.'s which his clownish exuberance attracted to their portion of the line. Certainly none of us then thought of this cheerful, irrepressible idiot as in any way heroic.

. . . . . .

Long before his period of training was completed Tompson had earned the reputation of being the most hardened and incorrigible criminal in his company. His conduct sheet read like a Newgate calendar for the number and variety of the crimes which it capitulated. There was no heinous offence—except, perhaps, desertion—which the desperado Tompson had not committed.—"Absent from Tattoo until 10.17 o'clock—

17 minutes "—" Late for parade "—" Walking out improperly dressed—(shoulder straps unbuttoned) "—" Using disrespectful language to a N.C.O."—" Appearing on parade with a cigarette behind his ear "—" Having a dirty rifle "—" Talking in Church while on Church parade "—" Shaving the upper lip in disobedience of a Battalion order "—and so on, and so on. A dreary, depressing catalogue of dastardly crime.

Even Erchie remonstrated with him on the enormity of his conduct, and pointed out that if he continued much longer on this depraved course the inevitable outcome would be the muster of a firing party at dawn on a grey, windy day—with Tompson playing the role of target.

Once it did seem as though Tompson were going to reform. On returning to the billet one night we found stuck over his bed a great placard, whereon was printed in black and red letters the following inscription :—

HEADQUARTERS
OF
THE LILY LEAGUE OF PURITY.

Founder and Chairman of the League—
Pte. P. Tompson.
Secretary of the League—Pte. P. Tompson.
Treasurer of the League—Pte. P. Tompson.

And then followed a recital of the aims and objects of the League. Its principal object was to abolish "the very prevalent and disgusting habit of swearing, and to encourage young soldiers to draw from the well of English pure and undefiled for the needs of their everyday conversation." And it was proposed to inflict a penalty of twopence on every man for each swear-word he used.

"I think it's a splendid idea," said the founder of the League: "it came to me to-night while I was sitting here alone meditating on my sins." (He was undergoing a term of C.B. then as usual.) "So I started to frame the constitution of the League, and printed this door-plate myself. It was a very difficult job—it cost me one and tenpence in fines before I got it done to my satisfaction."

He produced a box marked "Fines," and, even as he had said, there was a sum of one shilling and tenpence in it. Then someone asked what it was proposed to do with the money collected in fines, and Tompson gravely replied that that would go to pay the salaries of the management—*i.e.*, the Chairman, the Secretary, and the Treasurer. He said that he himself would probably suffer more financially from the operations of the League than any other man,

but he wouldn't grudge the money seeing that it all went for the great cause of purity in speech.

Then the Orderly Sergeant appeared and, catching sight of the placard on the wall, asked Tompson what blinketty-blank nonsense he was up to now—and Tompson repeated the Sergeant's speech, ticking off each word carefully on his fingers, and then informed the Sergeant that he had had one and tuppenceworth of language, and would he please pay over now ?

"I'll write you out a receipt, Sergeant," he added. "Hope you're satisfied with your selection. The goods are dirt cheap at the money."

The Sergeant then had three-and-fourpence-worth, and ordered the removal of the placard.

And that was the end of Tompson's Lily League of Purity.

. . . . . .

The first time that Tompson was in the trenches he did what every man in similar circumstances feels he would like to do, and what every idiot does. He popped his head over the parapet and had a good long look at the German trenches—and a smile of intense satisfaction played over his features, as though he had achieved a long desired object. And while he still smiled he heard a puff ! puff ! puff ! as from the exhaust

pipe of a motor car, and a hissing in the air around him; also, his Balmoral bonnet was jerked off his head. He descended hastily from the firing-step, and his face was paler than was its wont.

And he said just what every idiot says in the like circumstance—"Well, who'd have thought that would have happened!" in tones of aggrieved surprise.

When he picked up his cap he found that a bullet had passed through it and had taken the centre—the little figure of St. Andrew holding his cross—clean out of the cap-badge.

"Gad!" said he, "it might have been me instead of An'ra"—and he seemed rather tickled by the thought.

It was during his second four days' spell in the trenches that Tompson first really distinguished himself in France. For two days and nights things had been very quiet on our front—not a shell had come our way, and hardly a rifle shot had been fired.

"I do believe the Allemands have evacuated this part of their line," said Tompson.

And a Sergeant smiled in a slow, sarcastic way and said, "Yes, I do believe they have."

It was about a quarter of an hour after the rum issue—which was unusually liberal that

night—that Private Smith reported to a Corporal, who reported to the Platoon Sergeant, who reported to the Platoon Commander, who reported to the Officer Commanding Company, that Tompson had gone over the parapet and vanished into the darkness of No Man's Land.

Smith, the original informant, was sent for.

"Tompson said he was sure there were no Germans in the trenches," he explained to the Company Commander, "and he said he was going out to see for himself. I told him not to be an idiot—and then before I knew what he was about, he had scrambled on to the top of the parapet and was off."

About twenty minutes later those of us in the front line saw Tompson. A series of flares discovered him to us lying right up against the Germans' parapet, which was about fifty yards distant from our own. Then, after a spell of darkness, another flare revealed to us that he was no longer there—and some said that the enemy must have seen him and hauled him into their trench, and others said that he must be returning: and all of us were in a highly excited state of curiosity.

In a little while a dark figure appeared above our parapet, and vaulted down on to the firing-step—and lo! it was Tompson. Almost the

first man he met was his Company Commander. And to him Tompson blurted out at once in tones of the greatest surprise—

"Gad, sir! it's right enough. The trench is full of the blighters—absolutely bung-full of 'em. I heard them gassing away in their own lingo. Pity I don't know shorthand — and German. I could have filled a book with their jawing. And there was one blighter kept poppin' his head up and down within three feet of me—he must have been on look-out duty. I wanted like blazes to chuck a turf at him, but——"

Then the O.C. company broke in, and there was laughter underlying his sternness. "Tompson, you're a silly ass—you've exposed the life of one of my men to the greatest danger, when there was no earthly necessity for it. Mind, Tompson, I don't say that I don't admire your pluck, for I do: but you're a silly ass all the same. I'm sorry, but I've no other course than to report you to the Commanding Officer."

The upshot was that Tompson was awarded 21 days' F.P. No. 2 for that little escapade—and he was lucky to get off so easily.

. . . . . .

It is firmly believed in our battalion that Tompson was the original "lonely soldier" of

the British Expeditionary Force. When he had been in France only four days he wrote to the editor of "The Daily Looking-Glass" explaining that he was friendless and pining away for lack of intellectual nourishment, and that he would be glad to receive letters from "those of the opposite sex (young and pretty preferred)." His letter was printed, and he received forty-three letters and nineteen parcels in response. Thereafter he made it his recreation to answer all advertisements of ladies willing to correspond with lonely soldiers. Unless consignments of eatables and cigarettes were also forthcoming from the kind-hearted advertisers the correspondence speedily languished. "If they're too stingy to send material comforts," said Tompson, "they don't deserve to get letters from a real, live hero in the trenches."

The quantity of mail which he received daily was prodigious, and it has to be said of him that he was most generous in sharing his spoils with the other members of his platoon, who, in consequence, waxed ever fitter and fatter and jollier. Every man had a pair of socks, with the toes cut off, secured around the bolt of his rifle to protect it from dust and rain, had handkerchiefs to serve as oily rags, and a sleeping helmet for removing dirt from boots, and mufflers to

wind around his puttees when the trenches were muddy. There was simply no end to the beneficence of Tompson.

"I'm conducting this literary bureau from purely altruistic and patriotic motives," he explained every day; "it's all for the good of the boys, and is thus a blow struck at the very heart of the German Empire."

So voluminous was his correspondence that he had to acquire the habit of writing his letters in triplicate by the use of carbon papers, and before enclosing the letters in the green official envelopes—for which he bartered cigarettes with the other men in order to give himself the necessary supply—he was wont to read them aloud for the edification of the platoon. He drew harrowing pictures of his sufferings by reason of the coarseness of the Army victuals, gave long historical accounts of the progressive delicacy of his stomach from infant days, and invariably explained that he was entirely dependent for his nourishment on the choice viands sent by his correspondent. He weaved heart-burning tales of his loneliness—of his yearning for the solace of companionship, of how his fellows in arms, brave and heroic though they might be, were yet uncultured and uncouth, and had no affinity with him in things intellectual

or spiritual. And with a supreme modesty, yet withal a cinematographic realism, he would tell the story of how he brought down three enemy æroplanes with three consecutive rifle shots, or how he captured single-handed a half-dozen starving Germans by the simple expedient of hanging a bunch of sausages over the parapet and then grabbing the Allemands and hauling them into the British trench when they were within arm's-length of the tempting bait.

Once he wrote :—" To-day I have killed my thirty-seventh German ; I threw three bombs at him and then bayoneted what remained. I know you will think that thirty-seven is not a very big ' bag,' considering that I have been at the Front nearly five months. I recognise myself that it is a very little ' bit ' that I have been able to do so far, but perhaps I shall have better luck in future. It is with a deep sense of humility that I lay my little offering of thirty-seven Allemands on the altar of patriotism, knowing that my King and country will not spurn it nor cast it lightly aside. . . . One insuperable obstacle to my achievement of greater things is the almost womanly tenderness of my heart. I would not willingly hurt a louse—and I know it pained me far more to do my duty to each of those thirty-seven Germans than it pained

them. Merciful heavens! what I have suffered in my feelings no one can ever know."

It was with guff like that that Tompson assured himself of a large and regular supply of parcels from foolishly susceptible females.

. . . . . .

When he had been "hogging it" in the trenches for six months Tompson became "fed up" to intolerance; he felt he had had enough of the war, and his heart yearned for the peace of old Blighty. So he did what vast numbers of men suffering from mental repletion have done. He applied for a commission.

Gussie laughed loud and long when Tompson first made him aware of his intention.

"Oh, that's dem good," said Gussie, "dem good! Imagine old Tompson a Colonel an' leadin' his men to death or glory over the parapet! Haw! haw! haw!"

"Glory be hanged!" said Tompson. "I want to get back to Blighty and put up my star in a 3rd Line Battalion, and watch a squad of men doin' spittoon drill till the end of the war. That will be glory—be glory for me!"

Which is what other men have said, too, on like occasions.

So Tompson filled up a form with particulars of his name, age, nationality, etc., etc., and a

College professor declared that he had attained to a high standard of general education, and a clergyman certified that he was a most upright, honourable, and trustworthy young man, of unimpeachable character and high moral gifts; while a Justice of the Peace further testified that he was a youth of amiable manners and address, of good social standing, and having undoubted qualities of leadership!

Tompson blinked and blushed when he read these tributes to his worth. "My giddy aunt!" he exclaimed. "Is this me? Or have my papers got mixed up with those of St. Francis of Assisi? Pudd'n, bring me my halo forthwith, *tout de suite* and *immediatement!*" Then, after a pause —"I'll waste no more admiration on Baron Munchausen and Wolff's Bureau now—not while Britain possesses three such consummate liars as the writers of these certificates."

But Tompson's application for a commission was doomed to failure. The Commanding Officer refused to recommend him, and also lectured Tompson on his impudent presumption in daring to put forward commission papers, he whose field conduct sheet contained the record of as many crimes as a bound volume of the "Police Gazette."

Then Tompson tried to "work his ticket" through the Medical Officer. He began system-

atically to attend "sick parade," and complained to the doctor, in low tones that spoke of suffering stoically borne, of having stabbing pains in his back; and when the medical orderly essayed to rub the afflicted part Tompson gave vent to agonising gasps and long-drawn-out awful moans. For eight days this continued, by the end of which time Tompson had swallowed as many Number Nine pills as would have sufficed to keep a battalion in health for a year. Yet Tompson's back was decidedly worse; it was painful to see him hobbling down the trench to the Medical Officer's dug-out, and his moans when the doctor touched him or when he was detailed for a digging fatigue were heartrending. Tompson was fast becoming a veritable wreck, and daily he expressed his wonder that the M.O. did not send him to hospital, so that he might be invalided home ere he was an incurable cripple.

When we had retired from the trenches and were resting in Bethune, the Medical Officer relented and excused Tompson from duty. He was supposed to be too ill even to act as billet orderly. Yet that night he was making merry with the red-haired damozel who dispensed (surreptitiously) "Citron Ecossais," otherwise Scotch whisky, at the estaminet "*Au Bon*

Fumeur," and he returned to his billet forty-five minutes after roll-call.

"Fourteen days' Field Punishment Number One," said the C.O. next morning.

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Yes, Tompson is an ass—I've told him so to his face many and many a time, so it really doesn't matter if I say it publicly now; *he* won't mind: but I'd also like to say that I'd gladly doff my hat to Tompson, for Tompson is a hero. I hope he reads this; I'd like him to know that his pals are proud of him.

A small mine was to be exploded near the German lines, and we were to prepare to occupy the crater. A party of bombers would go over first to clear the way, and Tompson was one of them.

At the appointed minute there was a sickening heave of the ground, a terrific roar, and then the thud-thud and patter of falling stones and earth.

"Come on, men!" sounded the voice of the officer in charge of the bombing party, and from the dug-outs where they had been sheltering the bombers burst forth. They ran up a sap extending towards the enemy lines for forty yards or so, and the short remaining distance to the crater had to be traversed in the open. Despite

the celerity with which the movement was executed the enemy was first in possession of the crater, and a shower of bombs and some rifle shots greeted our men as they approached, but the bombs fell short and the rifle shots went wide.

It is difficult to describe what followed. A rapid fire was opened from each of the opposing trenches, and our guns started immediately to bombard the German front line. Within a minute the enemy guns were speaking too. The scream of the hurtling shells and the roar of their explosion filled all the air.

And over at the crater, in the midst of all this hell, two groups of figures struggled for the mastery. Our men had bombed the enemy out, and were in occupation of the crater; reinforcements were urgently required, but the enemy was bombarding heavily the sap along which these must come or cross in the open and be mown down by machine gun fire. The enemy advanced again to the attack, reinforced and with a fresh supply of bombs, whereas those of our men were depleted by nearly a half. One of the first bombs which the Germans threw put three of our men out of action, including the subaltern in charge and a sergeant. Four other men were incapacitated within the next minute, and then——!

Then Tompson, for perhaps the first time in his life, took himself seriously. Tompson took charge of things.

"Come on, chaps!" he cried to the six remaining men, "we're not going to be 'napooh'd' by these blighters. Give 'em socks! How's that, umpire!" he yelled a moment later as one of his bombs, accurately timed and accurately thrown, laid out two men of the opposing party.

He got one of the wounded men to collect bombs from the others who were *hors de combat*, and, standing half-exposed above the brink of the crater, himself hurled defiance and insult and bombs at the enemy. The greater number of the German missiles fell short, but five times did Tompson "field" them—catch them in the air as though they had been cricket balls, and with a lightning delivery return them from whence they came ere they burst. But there was no bomb left his hand with more than three seconds of passivity in it.

The Germans were forced to retire, and ere they could return to the attack our reinforcements had arrived—at a heavy cost, it is true, but in time to hold the crater.

Nor was Tompson's work finished then. One of the wounded men was in serious straits, and it seemed imperative that he should have skilled

medical attention immediately. The others, having received "first aid," might wait until the coming of darkness, when they could return in comparative safety to the trenches, or it might even be that the sap reaching out from the front line would be extended to the crater within a few hours.

Tompson looked a moment at the man who lay in agony.

"Well, here goes, chaps!" said he, and, having got the wounded man on his back, left the crater and made off across the open towards our own line. Instantly German machine guns rattled and rifles cracked; the air hissed with the flight of bullets—"sprayed around me, they did," he described it afterwards, "like water from the rose of a watering-can," but he stumbled on with his burden. He was within a yard or two of the sap-head and safety when he fell. Hands were reached out from the trench and his companion hauled in, and a few minutes later he too was pulled over the edge. But there were three bullets in his leg; and though his face was white and drawn, he did not moan nearly so loudly or frequently as he did when he had a "sore back."

"Guess I've got a 'Blighty hit' this time," he said, as the stretcher-bearers were carrying

him down the trench to the dressing station. "Just my rotten luck—I was only just beginning to enjoy myself."

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In "The Daily Looking-Glass" the other day there was a paragraph about Private Tompson, D.C.M., and a photograph which purported to be of him. It may have been—but all one could distinguish was a smile.

Tompson, it seems, has only one leg now. "With a modesty as charming as it is rare," wrote the reporter who interviewed him in hospital, "Private Tompson declined to say anything at all about the act of heroism for which he has been decorated by the King. But in a plaintive voice he asked me, 'Do you think there's any chance of the Compulsion Bill being extended to include one-legged men? I do hope so. I want to get out to the Front again—out among the boys. I loved the life—it's such glorious sport slaying Allemands day after day. It's a gorgeous picnic, and I'm simply amazed that any man should want to stay away from it. You put it in big type that the greatest desire of my heart is to be sent out to the Front again. The boys in the trenches will understand, if nobody else does.'"

I'm wondering if Tompson really said that: it's the sort of thing he *would* say to a gullible pressman.

Tompson, I am afraid, will always be an ass as well as a hero.

CHRISTMAS AND THE NEW YEAR (1915-16).

"Christmas, Christmas, happy time!
Joy bells ring a merry chime."

So sang one of the men as, on Christmas Eve, we marched up towards the trenches from the billets in the rear where we had been resting for two days. We marched in a terrific downpour of rain, and those who, like myself, were not wearing greatcoats or leather jerkins, were skin-wet within a few minutes of the commencement of the rain.

"Not much suggestion of joy bells about this," said little Jimmy M——. "Reminds me more of a ship's hose in full blast than of anything else."

I was one of a fatigue party detailed to carry the Orderly Room equipment up the trenches to Headquarters. Besides being burdened with our own heavy accoutrements, each of us bore on his shoulder a large box or bale. Owing to some oversight none of us was provided with rubber boots, and as, immediately we entered

the communication trench, we plunged into eighteen inches of water, the resultant feeling was not pleasant.

"This is 'bon,'" said The Artist, who preceded me in the file. "Surf bathing! A novel pastime for Christmas Eve!"

"Look out there!" shouted the leading man. "The water's getting deeper."

"Keep your weather eye open for periscopes! German submarines skulking in this deep lake we're coming to," was how The Artist passed the warning to me.

The water reached well above our knees, and as we progressed it became muddier and thicker, until we were tugging and straining and barging through a slimy quagmire of the consistency of cold porridge. Panting and gasping, our faces exuding a muddy sweat, we struggled on with our heavy burdens, and at intervals of every fifty yards or so we were compelled to halt to regain our breath.

After an awful hour and a half of this we reached the dugout dignified by the title of Headquarters and deposited our burdens. We were wet and muddied all over, and physically exhausted, and soon our discomfort from the cold was intense. It was nearing 9 p.m., and we had eaten nothing since early morning, so

hunger was added to our growing miseries. With difficulty we collected a little fuel and lit a fire, but the wood was damp, and it was long ere the pan of water boiled and we regaled ourselves with tea. Coldly miserable we sat around the brazier and watched the last handful of embers crumble into grey dust, all the available fuel being exhausted.

The Artist broke a long silence. "Jolly way to spend Christmas Eve," said he.

"And at home they're making merry
'Neath the white and scarlet berry:
What place have France's exiles in their mirth?"

I adapted some lines of Kipling's.

"But they're not," said Ginger suddenly; "they're not making merry . . . this year. I believe those at home will be about as miserable as we are."

"Poor beggars!" said The Artist compassionately.

. . . . . .

"Fall in for rum!"

With our tin cups in our hands we lined up in the trench beside the Headquarters dugout. An officer issued the "tots," and in his presence the men gulped down the strong, burning fluid. Some choked and gasped for a few moments and

had not breath to say a "Thank you, sir!" But the more seasoned old sweds—some of them having weathered barely nineteen Summers—smacked satisfied lips, and there was increased reverence in their parting salute.

"Abominable stuff that," said Ginger, when we had retired again to our dugout. "I loathe the taste of it—yet, Lord knows, that wee tot has been the one bright spot in this Christmas Eve."

We were certainly warmer and less miserable now, and we composed ourselves on the ground, our wet and muddied coats thrown over us, for sleep. We had all changed into dry socks, and the old ones, clogged and heavy with mud, were hung around the edge of the empty brazier.

"Poor old Santa Claus will get a shock when he puts his hand in these to-night," said The Artist.

And, "I'm sorry for his reindeer if they have to come up the trenches," said Ginger pensively. Then we tried to sleep.

. . . . . .

Christmas Day was like any other day spent in the trenches, and was without exciting incident. There was none of the friendly but foolish communication with the enemy that occurred a year ago (Christmas, 1914), and while

the German artillery at our portion of the line was comparatively quiet, the British guns kept up an intermittent bombardment all day, which must have had a disturbing effect on any festivities going on in the German trenches.

Three days later we were relieved and marched back for an eagerly anticipated rest. It was not until the third day of our journey that we reached St. Hilaire, the village that was our destination, and on that day the battalion presented as brave and fine a sight as I have witnessed for long.

When in the danger zone a battalion on the march never proceeds as a whole, but is broken up into platoons or half-companies, with an interval of several hundreds of yards between each. But now we were far from the madding shells, and the battalion marched in column of route even as in the days of our training. The pipe band led the way, and thrilling and soothing was the music of the pipes to ears long accustomed to the hellish din of bursting lyddite. Muddied still were the boys after their spell in the trenches, but jauntily did they step out, and blythe were their hearts and active their tongues. The transport section followed in the rear of the battalion, a long and imposing procession, for it was swollen beyond its normal

proportions by reason of the many tons of Christmas and New Year gifts which it carried for distribution among the "Jocks."

On Hogmanay, after we were settled in our new quarters, these presents were issued to the men along with their rations, and for the rest of the day every Highlander one met was smoking a fat cigar or talked with difficulty through a mouthful of sweets or fruit.

It was permitted us to hold "a jollification" in our several billets that night. Shortly before midnight the skirl of the pipes was heard, and incontinently we rushed out into the dark street. The pipe band was advancing up the middle of the roadway, and the air was thrilling to its strains. We followed in its wake—some hundreds of us—dancing and capering as perhaps only men just relieved from the misery of the trenches could do, and there was much flashing and waving of electric torches. A halt was made in front of the Headquarters Mess, at the door of which the officers were gathered, and on the stroke of midnight a mighty cheer arose, and then there was a general scramble as men rushed around trying to seek out their particular friends, and the air resounded with shouted greetings in healthy Doric and sick French, and excitement and hilarity prevailed.

Then the band marched off playing a lively tune, and immediately the Regimental Police adjured the men to return to their billets. Within ten minutes the streets of the little French village were silent, dark, and deserted.

. . . . . .

On our return to the billet a cheering sight confronted us. A blaze of light filled the barn, emanating from an improvised table set in the centre of the straw-covered floor. The table was covered with newspapers in lieu of a cloth, and at each corner was an upright bayonet entwined with holly. Eight or nine empty champagne bottles served as candle sconces, and they were artistically arranged amid a picturesque and appetising litter of viands. Currant bun, shortbread, and cakes of many kinds, fruit and sweets, and plum puddings rich and steaming hot, were there. We had pooled our individual "Jock's Boxes," and this was the result. And there was a nip of "real Scotch" for every man—just enough to lend the flavour of a Scots Ne'erday to the proceedings, and to make believe that it was a "really, truly banquet" we were attending.

We lay on the straw-covered floor and ate our fill, and afterwards we had a song-fest; and it was only when the hour was three o'clock

and the candles had guttered down and out that we sought our blankets and repose.

Thus it was that in innocent, light-hearted fashion the Highlanders laughed the New Year in.

THE GLORY OF WAR.

"Glory!" said the School-Master in tones of withering scorn. "Glory! Oh, yes, I know all about glory. I once saw a fancy flowered waistcoat of Napoleon's in a waxworks show. A little, round, pot-bellied waistcoat. And the crowd gaped at it with mouths and eyes. . . . I knew that for glory." He tapped the black, worn rim of his briar pipe on the edge of the red-hot brazier that occupied the centre of the dugout, then resumed.

"All the glory is gone out of glory nowadays —out of the word 'glory' I mean. The Salvation Army and the newspapers have overworked and tortured the word until there's no longer any juice left in it. . . . There's a lot of piffle talked about the 'glory of war'—or rather a lot of piffle is implied in the mere use of the phrase; and it is used by those who know as little about what glory is as they know about what war is. There's no such thing as the 'glory of war.' The phrase is not merely meaningless: it gives expression to a lie. For there's not a

trace of glory in war *as* war. . . . War is simply lunacy, organised, gigantic; it's the most pathetically futile thing known to the gods . . ."

The School-Master paused to light his refilled pipe. His three companions, sprawling on the floor of the dugout, gazed into the red heart of the charcoal fire, but only The Artist ventured any comment.

"Go on; stick it, Jerry!" he encouraged the School-Master.

The latter continued—"It was the Ancients who started the prattle about the glory of war—and when I speak of the Ancients I mean, of course, all those who lived out their lives in that far-off period in the world's history that began with the first man and ended in August, 1914. And the Ancients didn't know what they were talking about, for they had never even conceived, much less experienced, a real war—a war as you and I understand it. *Their* wars were like garden party entertainments, where hired performers did tricks with bows and arrows, or maybe rifles and bayonets, and the guests were interested and amused and afterwards showed their appreciation by hip-hooraying or flag-wagging or blowing tin trumpets or writing songs in honour of the gentlemen in fancy

dress who had entertained them. And all boasted about the cleverness of their own particular star turns—about their valour and prowess—and all basked and preened themselves in the reflected glory of these. And this they called patriotism ! . . .

" The poets . . . they were the men who used to record the big events of an era in great and glowing words, and to set down in measured syllables the high thoughts of their time. To-day this work is done by *The Daily Mail* and Horatio Bottomley and the cinema . . . the poets especially talked much of the glory of war —but that was simply because war provided them with good 'copy.' I'd defy Homer or little Willie Shakespeare to find any real glory in this war as viewed from the standpoint of the man in the trenches."

The Artist lifted a querying eyebrow. " Methinks you've got the camellious hump, my scholastic friend," said he. " Are you feeling fed-up ?"

" Am I Hell !" The School-Master spoke with vigour and impatience. " And who wouldn't be ! I've fed on the glory of war for so long a time that I've got chronic tummy-ache." He popped a morsel of Army biscuit in his mouth and bit and chewed viciously.

"Glory of war!" he repeated, with growing scorn. "Glory of war! Do *you* know the glory of war?" He spat out the question fiercely at Ginger, then continued without a pause. "I'll tell you what the glory of war is. It's leading an existence that any decent animal would hate —mucking it in the trenches day after day, week after week, month after month—wallowing in mud, plastered and caked with it, eating it with your meals. It's discomfort—prolonged, awful discomfort—from cold and wet and vermin, being so acutely miserable at times that your greatest—nay, your only—desire is to go down for the count and that quickly. It's loathing yourself with a sickening loathing because you know yourself for a filthy and verminous thing . . .

"It's digging—endlessly digging—month in, month out—with burning hands and aching back; breaking up and parcelling the European Continent into sandbags—as one might ladle the Atlantic with a teaspoon. It's having a discontent always gnawing at your vitals—for you see the pitiable futility of all your toil and stress —how essentially unproductive it is—how wastefully misapplied . . .

"At its best and easiest, war is a painfully dull, monotonous existence amid conditions of almost incredible discomfort and inconvenience,

and wholly divorced from all those pleasures and refinements of living that a civilised man may reasonably long for and expect to enjoy. At its worst——

"To crouch and cower for weary, endless hours against the parapet at the bottom of a trench, with a remorseless succession of shells bursting overhead and the hum and hiss of flying shrapnel ever present in your ears—to wait and wait and do nothing—nothing but wonder when one of these jagged missiles will find a target in you—to see your best pal go West in a sudden horrid gush and welter of blood—to see others reduced in a moment to hideous, shapeless things; to hear strong men sobbing and drivelling like children . . . And still you wait and wait and wonder when *your* shell will come—and you feel dazed with the horror of the thing and the din—and under the strain your self-control gradually leaves you, and you find yourself babbling incoherent, inconsequent prayers into the wall of sandbags—just as the pale, haggard, wide-eyed, stupefied men beside you are doing. And you pray that *your* shell may come soon—soon; fearful lest you should have to live an hour longer in this hell. . . . That's war, my boy, as *we* know it—and that's all of glory or romance there is in it . . .

"The Glory of War!" . . . The School-Master shook his head slowly. "War is the dreariest weariest, dullest game in the world —when it isn't merely horrifying or saddening or disgusting and revolting."

Ginger stroked the bald patch on his head with a caressing finger. "But what about the rewards of glory?" asked he.

The School-Master snorted. "Rewards, forsooth! Isn't glory supposed to be its own reward? But perhaps you mean to infer that there are compensations for the 'glory' we suffer in the trenches. The gratitude of the people at home for our labours on their behalf, maybe? . . . H'm! That sort of gratitude is notoriously short-lived. Public service and public servants are soon forgotten. Past experience proves that. Or maybe you mean that we here in France receive some compensation for our miseries. . . . Well, there's the bob a day that we receive from a grateful and beneficent Government. And there's the grub we get . . it's a change from home fare, anyway. And there's the soldier-like language we have directed at us by our loving N.C.O.'s when anything has happened to annoy them—there's an element of education in that, I admit. Then there are the pleasures that the country of France itself—or

that part of it immediately behind our fighting line—affords. One certainly has the opportunity occasionally of getting villainously drunk on cheap wine and cheaper beer, which are not too cheap, however, when one considers their quality. And one may make-believe to flirt with the lady, usually possessed of a complexion of violent contrasts, who serves the poison in the estaminet . . . But we really have to deceive ourselves if we wish to believe that we are having a good time. It's only good in comparison with the bad times we have lately known—and these were very, very bad. The pleasures that the war affords us are crude, and we have to take them crudely. They are of the same stuff as—are part and parcel of—the glory of war."

The School-Master shook up the brazier and dropped in a few more lumps of charcoal. "Let's drop for ever," he said, "all this cant about the glory of war. There's no glory in it—there never was. War is a ghastly, hideous, lunatic business from beginning to end. Thank Heaven that—whatever our motives were—we didn't come into this war for glory. It was Germany who made that supreme error—and she has long ago realised that war is not at all the glorious thing that she had imagined—that her experience in 1871 had seemed to teach her."

The School-Master reached backwards for a petrol tin containing water and took an economical sip. And just then a Sergeant blocked the entrance to the dugout. "Will any of you men volunteer to go on a patrol to-night?" he asked. "I don't mind telling you that it will be rather a dangerous job, and we're only taking volunteers for it. Any of you willing to go?"

"Put my name down," said the School-Master.

MUD.

You know the brave, saucy swing of a Highland regiment as it marches along a city street to the shrilling of the pipes. The kilted lads, so gay and debonnair, so spruce and trim from spats to cap-badge, have won your admiration.

If only you could see them now—if only you could see the uniform that is theirs.

Their kilts are now of khaki colour, and when dry—which is very seldom—would stand upright of themselves; for dry mud makes for rigidity. Each man wears a pair of long rubber boots which reach to the top of the thighs; and while some are content to wear their kilt over these in the ordinary way, others make a desperate attempt to stuff the folds inside the tops of the boots. Over the tunic a stout leather jerkin is worn, armless, and descending well below the hips. And if you can conceive of a coating of thick mud over all, varying from a quarter inch to an inch in thickness, and a muddied stubble of beard that effectively disguises the most familiar face, you have a mental picture of the once swanky Highlanders.

The battalion orderlies, whose duty it is to carry messages from headquarters to the various companies in the line, have improved even on the foregoing dress, for they have altogether discarded the kilt while in the trenches. They are literally clothed in sackcloth—and mud instead of ashes, for the lower parts of their bodies and the upper parts of their legs are voluminously swathed in sandbags. The appearance they thus present, if not exactly picturesque, is at all events sufficiently quaint and arresting.

No comedian of the halls ever appeared in a costume more fantastic or ridiculous to the eye than ours; in pre-war days it would only have been necessary for us to walk on any stage to evoke roars of laughter.

"Wouldn't I just cut a dash in Bond Street with these togs on?" sighed a Highlander the other day, "'the shady side, the ladies' side of Bond Street!' And"—surveying the thick shapelessness of his rubber-booted legs—"wouldn't I just be a star turn as the hind legs of a pantomime elephant!"

Yes, it's fortunate that we are still able to laugh at the absurdity of our appearance. If we are scarecrows, we are at all events fairly cheerful ones.

. . . . . .

I encountered my friend Gussie in Cheyne Walk yesterday. I was going down that busy thoroughfare and he was going up—at least he had been, but at the moment of our meeting he was a fixture, he was securely anchored, he was as incapable of forward movement as the statue on the Nelson Column in Trafalgar Square. In short, he was embedded in mud, that was thicker than porridge, nearly to the hips.

"Hullo!" said Gussie, "you're the very man I've been looking for."

I asked a silly question. "What you doin' here?" I queried.

"Oh, just havin' an airin' an' puttin' a good thick poultice round my legs." This was "spoke sarcastic." "I've been stuck here for a quarter of an hour waitin' on someone to give me a hand out, an' I've turned seven different kinds of colour with fear that the Allemands would begin strafein' me or snipin' at me with their 9·2's while I had taken root here. Give's a hand, will you?"

I was only sunk in mud to the knees, so I was comparatively well off, but my legs ached with the constant effort of tugging and straining to be free of the mud. The extrication of Gussie was quite a long job, for I had no spade wherewith to dig him out, and in extending him a hand

I had to be careful that I was not pulled into the hole that had engulfed him.

But at length he stood in only two feet of mud, and we remained awhile to congratulate ourselves on our successful efforts and to compare notes on the week's events.

"What's Baker Street like?" asked Gussie when it was time for us to part. "I think I'll try it."

"Oh, Baker Street's your best way," I answered. "I swam down it this morning—the water was glorious. I had a lovely bathe."

"How deep?" asked Gussie.

"Oh, about four inches above the knees," I told him. "But it's really, truly water, you know—not more than a few inches of mud at the bottom. I washed my face in it this morning."

"Bon!" said Gussie. "I thought there was something unusual about your appearance. I see what it is. You've got a complexion instead of an ordinary untinted plaster cast. Tut! such snobbishness—must be washed even if it's in a mud puddle, and you call yourself a soldier. Fie!"

Then we continued on our separate ways, lurching and plunging through the mud.

SENTIMENTAL TOMMY.

Tommy was a nice youngster—fine-souled, sweet-hearted, laughter-loving. The first occasion on which I spoke to him was when I discovered him seated in a dugout in the trenches, plastered with mud from head to foot, and engrossed in a copy of Palgrave's "Golden Treasury." And a little later I made him my friend for life by lending him a copy of Gissing's "Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft." His enthusiasm over "Ryecroft" was refreshing.

He was twenty-two years old, but with his girlish complexion, his short crisp fair hair, and his blue eyes, he looked more boyish than his years; and he spoke with a pleasant Southern accent learned of an English mother. He was her only child, and usually referred to her as The Little Lady at Home—and with all the reverence that habitually characterises the soldier's references to his mother. For there is that in warfare which increases a man's appreciation of motherhood—raises it to worship. I have heard the roughest, most toughened, most

reckless soldiers speak with the tongues of angels when their thoughts turned to Her who waits and prays.

. . . . . .

We were billeted in a ruined cottage in "Harley Street"—a road lying in rear of the firing-line, and communicating with it by a series of trenches. The roof had gone the way of all roofs in this neighbourhood, and above us was only the wooden floor of the upper storey. In one corner there was a jagged hole in this, several feet in diameter, and underneath it the stone floor of our apartment was wet and muddy. The sandbags stretched across the empty window frame bellied inwards, and the wind blew down the crumbling chimney-vent in fierce gusts, spraying lime dust and ashes into the room. Tommy and I crouched over a charcoal brazier placed close to the gaping hole in the wall where the fireplace had once been. Wrapped in their greatcoats and blankets a half-dozen other men lay on the floor, in those places most immune from draughts.

Tommy lit a cigarette and then, with hands outstretched to the brazier, sighed forth a thin cloud of tobacco smoke.

"I've got the blooming pip to-day," he confessed; "I dunno why, for I shouldn't have,

seeing that we came out of the trenches yesterday for four days."

"Guess you've been thinking of your leave, Tommy, and the good times you had at home a fortnight ago," said I, as I threw on a handful of charcoal and wiped my hands on my wet puttees.

"That's just what I was thinking about. I say, Leo, isn't it awful coming from that to this?"

He glanced scornfully around—at the cob-webbed wooden rafters of the ceiling, at the broken, discoloured plaster on the walls, at the muddy floor.

"And to think that only two weeks ago I was sitting in an armchair before a great fire, with all my heart's desire about and around and within me. The Little Lady was there too, looking as happy and pleased as though she'd just come into a fortune. . . ."

"I fancy you were the fortune that she'd found," I ventured, remembering the ways of mothers.

"That was it!" said Tommy with a sudden energy and a seriousness that were almost amusing. "She thinks I'm just 'It'—Me! A rotter like me!"

"But you're not such an awful rotter, Tommy, you're rather a good sort," I said half smiling.

"Oh, but you don't know—you don't understand—nobody could. You've never seen the Little Lady. She's not really little, you know—she's as tall as I am, and she's a stunner for looks. I like grey hair—don't you? Hers is nearly white—yet she's quite young. She's a real sport, a topping good sort—the best pal in the world. I call her 'old fellow' sometimes, and she likes it."

He gave the brazier a kick with his foot to shake up the charcoal, and went on—"She fussed over me a lot when I was home—it was great to have her. I can't stick people fussing over me, as a rule, but I didn't mind her doing it then. She knows just what a fellow wants."

The crackle of musketry and of machine gun fire came to our ears from the firing-line, and there was the faint dull sound of shells bursting far away.

"Hear that!" said Tommy. "They're at it again. . . . And two weeks ago I hardly knew there was a war on. I remembered you fellows often, and talked about you, but somehow I couldn't realise that you were still hogging it 'somewhere in France.' You seemed to belong to a period of my life long past. Why, the first thing I did when I reached home was to get into my old civvy clothes—and honestly I hardly

knew myself. I felt like the King of creation. When my throat was walled round again with a white linen collar—when I'd thrust my hands deep into my trousers pockets and jingled a bunch of keys and a few honest English shillings —I couldn't help laughing. I felt as though I'd suddenly recovered my individuality which I'd lost: I was no longer a mere number — the smallest of small cogs in the great military machine. I was the old ME, independent of action, free to do what and go where I chose. And as I walked along the streets I just didn't give a damn for anybody or anything."

There was a stunning roar—and another—and another—and the walls of the house shook. A battery of guns stationed a little distance behind our billet had opened fire on the German lines.

But the look of tender reminiscence still lingered in Tommy's eyes.

"Dear old Blighty!" said he.

And the shatter-batter of the guns continued.

. . . . . .

Tommy rose and donned his greatcoat, for the tiny charcoal fire was insufficient to drive the chill from our bones. When he had re-seated himself—

"You know," said he, "I never realised how great was the refining influence of women

until I joined the Army and was divorced from all feminine society. A good woman's society breeds fineness of soul in a man: where women are, the very atmosphere seems softer, sweeter, purer, don't you think? I felt it so when I was with the Little Lady . . . and others."

"And another, don't you mean, Tommy?" I queried in mild amusement.

He laughed—half shyly. "I see what you're driving at. Yes, maybe you're right. I had only two women in mind when I spoke—the Little Lady and . . . another. But it's true, isn't it? I know that when I returned here my soul sickened at the rough, coarse talk of some of the boys—I hated it—yet now after only a fortnight I hardly notice it. The woman influence has worn off."

"Hardly that," I interpolated. "You've simply come to realise again that all the oaths you hear are meaningless: they're the result, not so much of mental depravity as of mental laziness—thoughtlessness."

"I know that; I'd got into the habit of talking loosely and coarsely myself before I went on leave, but I forgot all that when I was with the Little Lady again."

"And another," I interjected.

"Oh, that's understood," he laughed. Then, serious still, "But you're not to think from what I've said that I'm not glad to be with the boys. After all's said and done, I'd rather be hogging it in the mud with them than be anywhere else. They're great, aren't they ?—Sports, every one of 'em. It's worth while to have lived just to have known and been able to appreciate so many real men. I'm often glad now that I didn't take a commission—that I didn't shirk the last least bit of hardship—I'm glad I'm just a common swed, doing the same little bit as the humblest, most uneducated man in the land. It makes me realise so much more that I'm that fellow's brother—and I don't think I'd like to feel that I was leaving the unpleasantest work for another man to do."

"Sentimental Thomas Atkins !" said I.

"Huh ! That's what the Little Lady calls me sometimes—Sentimental Tommy."

. . . . . .

The Artist rose from the dark corner where he had been lying, shook himself like a retriever just emerged from water, and came forward to the brazier.

"Br-r-r !" he shivered. "I feel exactly like a ha'p'orth of ice cream. It's not half *froid*."

He squatted on the floor close beside the brazier.

"What the dickens have you chaps been talking about for the last hour? I've heard you mumbling away like a pair of old crones. Wonder what sort of night it is!"

He rose and went to the doorway, pulled aside the waterproof sheet that served as door, and looked out.

"Bon!" said he. "It's started to freeze—and the moon and stars and all the elements of romance are here—all except the girl. 'Bokoo' shells bursting up in the firing-line. . . . Eh! there's a big dirty one . . . hear it?—and the Allemands are sending up as many flares as there are stars in the sky. They've got the wind up, sure. Reg'lar theatrical performance it is."

The Artist stepped outside to view the fireworks.

"I was at a theatre one night while I was home," said Tommy suddenly, apropos of the last remark. "And I don't think I ever enjoyed anything so much. It was a musical show—lots of singing and dancing and pretty girls—and I daresay it wasn't great of its kind. But I wasn't critical—it was the first theatrical performance I'd seen for eighteen months, and I enjoyed it immoderately.

"Did you ever remark how often over here one's thoughts turn to plays that one has seen in the past? It's so with me, anyway. Often and often, when cold and miserable in the trenches, I've found myself picturing some revue or musical play that I've seen, and a craving has arisen in me to experience again all the old joyousness of it—a craving as strong as that of hunger. The fluffy, frilly girls—the gay dresses—the bright lights and the painted scenery—and the irresponsible frivolity of it all—I've longed for that as a world-weary man might long for heaven. And I've known one of those jingling, pretty-pretty melodies of the theatre—the kind you tire of after you've heard them twice—haunt me and move me almost to tears. For somehow they carry such a wealth of association with them—like music from a better, brighter world—one we knew of old and lost. . . .

"Well, when I was in the theatre at home I seemed to have regained that light, bright, carefree world, and somehow at the back of my mind all the time was a faint consciousness of the miseries of the trenches, and doubtless the involuntary contrast quickened my enjoyment of the play."

"Was the Little Lady with you that night?" I asked.

There was a shy roguishness in his smile as he answered, "Nitski! Not that night. It was Helen of Troy who was with me then."

"A Trojan?"

"You bet! A trump—a—a——."

"'Queen rose of the rosebud garden of girls,'" I suggested.

"Now you've got it! She's all that—and then some more. She's the best of the best."

"Next to the Little Lady, of course?"

"I dunno—The Little Lady's first, of course—but Helen's first too. But what's the use of talking? Want to see her? Half a minute!"

From the pocket inside the cover of his pay-book he produced a photograph—that of a sweet-faced girl.

Tommy broke in upon my admiring comments.

"But that isn't really good of her. She's heaps better-looking than that—although she can't help looking nice there too. But you get no idea from that of the bluey-black shadows in her hair, or of the warmth and softness and tenderness in her brown eyes. And her complexion doesn't——"

"Now look here, Tommy, you're giving yourself away completely," I interjected.

"Huh! I fancy I did that when I was at home . . . to her," he laughed softly.

"So this is Miss One-and-Only, is it? You young oyster, you never said a word about her to me before."

He laughed delightedly. "No, I didn't talk much about her, but maybe I thought a lot."

"And now you'll be dreaming golden dreams of being happy ever *après la guerre*."

"Something like that, I suppose. But even after the Big Job is finished I'll have much to do before my dreams materialise. I know they will—some day! I've a feeling in my bones. When I first came out to France, over a year ago, I felt sure I'd be one of the first to be knocked out. I looked for bad luck, and it didn't come. But after coming through the hell of the Richebourg bombardment my bad presentiments completely vanished, and I knew I was destined to come through this war safely. And I'm sure of it now. The shell hasn't been made yet that's got my name scratched on it."

Here The Artist entered again.

"I'm nearly frozen watching those fireworks," said he. "Any of you got any water in your bottles to make tea?"

None of us had, but the idea of a hot drink appealed to us.

"The water carts are just a couple of hundred yards along the road," said The Artist. "Let's toss to decide who goes for water."

We tossed and Tommy was odd man out. He picked up a mess-tin and two water-bottles.

"Be back in five minutes," said he, and disappeared.

. . . . . .

The Artist and I stoked the fire and brought it to a red glow. Nearly a quarter of an hour elapsed before we heard footsteps outside. But it was not Tommy.

Ginger burst in breathlessly. "Where's Tommy's kit? Quick! It's to be taken along to the dressing-station now."

"What's up?" I asked in alarm as I rose.

"Tommy's been hit. A stray bullet caught him just along the road a wee bit—between here and the water carts. Plugged him clean—drilled him through the stomach. I'm afraid he's 'napooh'd.'"

"God's truth!" said The Artist helplessly.

. . . . . .

Tommy "went West" a few hours later; he never left the Field Dressing Station. And next day a parcel came for him and, in accordance with an unwritten law of Army messes, his messmates opened it. But we all choked a

little over the grub it contained, and didn't relish it as much as usual: and inside the parcel there was a card inscribed "To My soldier, Sentimental Tommy, with love from The Little Lady." And we all choked a little over the reading of that too.

OUR FRIENDS THE FRENCH.*

The *Grande Place* is steeped in the mellow sunshine of early evening. The air is luminous —there is a hint of gold in it; the shadows on the *pavée* square are long and exquisitely soft.

The buildings—mostly of three or four storeys in height—present an unbroken front on each side of the vast square. Many of them have been painted in colours once bright, but now subdued as a consequence of war time economies. But the window-boxes and shutters are still gay, and there are red-tiled roofs that are joyous amid their more sombre neighbours. The total effect is quaint and picturesque enough. Islanded at one end of the square stands the *hotel de ville*, a building massive, substantial, gracefully proportioned, its clock tower a landmark for miles around. In its material properties the building seems to typify this thriving populous town of the *Pas de Calais*.

* This sketch was written at St. Omer in the Spring of 1916, when the Verdun battle was at its fiercest. At that time the Glasgow Highlanders were engaged in guarding the British Lines of Communication, the Battalion Headquarters being at St. Omer.

British soldiers and French civilians in almost equal numbers move to and fro on the great square, in leisurely fashion for the most part, for in the evening there is little business traffic here. Occasionally one hears the tramp of mailed boots on the paving stones, and one may see a little party of soldiers, probably dressed in dongaree overalls, returning to their billets after a fatigue. Sometimes a military band gives a concert in the square, and then you will see Tommies and Poilus and French civilians gathered together into one friendly crowd listening to the music.

Between the hours of six and eight the *estaminets* are full of British soldiers, resting and refreshing themselves after the labours of the day. The *Estaminet La Belle Vue* faces directly on the *Grande Place*. The two broad high windows, which together with the doorway fill its entire frontage, are open. Within, the air is cool and fresh, and the sunlit square presents a pleasing panorama to the eyes.

In one of the window spaces which project balcony-wise over the footpath a half-dozen British officers, lounging around a small table, are discussing Benedictine and the latest war rumours; in the other several Tommies slake their dusty throats with French beer at two

sous a glass, or, if it happens to be pay-day, with English stout at twelve sous a glass—the while they express critical opinions on the performances of the opposing teams in the inter-regimental football match played two days previously, or on the appearance and dress of any attractive morsel of femininity who may chance to cross the square.

"Crickey! She's got lotsa powder on 'er face, that little bit o' fluff 'as," one will say: "I kin see it glistenin' from 'ere."

"Narrabit of it," another will respond: "that's o'ny sweat."

At little tables scattered about the spacious floor other men in khaki are seated quietly gossiping, and on a raised platform at the farther end of the room two earnest sons of Mars stump to and fro and round and round a lumpy billiard table without ever making any appreciable addition to their scores despite their extravagant use of Madame's chalk.

One side of the *auberge* is occupied by French civilians—men whose ages range from forty-odd to eighty. Practically the same men come evening after evening, for this hospitable house is in the nature of a social club to them. For two or maybe three hours they will sit chatting intently and cheerfully among themselves, dis-

cussing the latest trend of the war as it is gathered from the Paris *Matin* or *Le Journal du Nord*, and tracing with stubby forefingers the maps illustrative of the march of events.

To the British listener, depressed a little by the party spite, the rancorous political hostilities, the malign abuse of individuals, which to-day inform the London press, the conversation of these amiable *bourgeois* is tonic and refreshing. Their faith in *Père Joffre* and his generals and in the Ministers of State is so implicit, so profound ; their confidence in the ultimate achievement of the Allies' aims is so unquestioned, so essential, so obsessive. Do things go ill for France ? No matter ! It is but for the moment ; the luck of war : but the end will be the same. If they ever have doubts they do not express them—not even by a tone or inflexion of the voice.

At intervals of a few days a German æroplane or æroplanes will appear over the town, and bombs may be dropped and civilians killed ; and in the evening the "old boys" will still meet at *La Belle Vue*, and if there is a hint of mournful solemnity in their voices as they speak of the innocent victims of the raid, and if there is an added bitterness in their references to *ces Allemands sacrés*, there is no shade of pessimism. Although every night they hear the rumbling of

the guns up in the area of the conflict they have no fear; and if their eyes are daily saddened by the spectacle of maimed and broken youth —if their own best and dearest pay the full price for love of country—yet do they never flinch or falter in their determination or their high hopes. If they are weary of war it is not with the weariness of enervation or spent zeal. France was war-weary ere ever August 1st, 1914, dawned: her past history she has written in blood, and the story of her Greatest Glory she is writing now in blood, writing at the dictate of Honour.

One used to think of France—(the impression may have been a wrong one, but there it was) —as a youth (for France is always young), of brilliant parts, clever, gay, cynical, with light laughter on the lips and love of ease and pleasure in the heart: doing some things well—oh, very well—yet not throwing the weight of his whole being into the business of life: a little lethargic, a little easy-going, a little *enervé*. But to-day we see France as a strong man stripped to the buff, his muscles steeled, his every sense alert and directed towards one end: his mind bent on a single purpose—a purpose that is a passion. Bruised and bleeding from a hundred wounds, yet he falters not in the grim struggle—he fights for very life itself — and in his blows is the

strength that cometh from consciousness of right: and in his eyes is the light of a great courage, a noble pride, a high hope, and on his set lips the seal of the Will-to-conquer.

France—La Belle France, to revert to the feminine appellation that is usual—has created for herself a new soul, and has won a greater glory than she has yet known.

. . . . . .

In the estaminet, when their talk is done, the "old boys" fall to playing cards. Marguerite—a pleasant-faced lass and a sensible one—moves hither and thither supplying them with refreshments and exchanging a cheery word with each. Their requirements are modest, for a single glass of beer or wine or maybe two will suffice them for the entire evening—at a cost of a penny or two. Henri, the waiter, resplendent in an evening suit, a spotless white apron, and the tiniest and glossiest of fair moustaches, also bustles around in attendance on Madame's guests. He says "Good evening, t'ank you!" to every British soldier who enters, and he has, I think, the winsomest smile that I ever saw on a man's face. One likes to speak with the seventeen-years-old Henri, if only for the charm of his smile. The one thing he will not do for a British soldier is to converse with him in French.

Henri insists on speaking in English, even though his interlocutor may use French. "I know that I spik ver' bad," he says, "but I learn—*comme ça.*" A statement there is no disputing.

Madame presides over the destinies of the establishment from a high stool behind the bar. There is not much that happens within the four walls that escapes her observant eyes, especially if it affects the till. In all the Pas de Calais there is no more shrewd woman of business—and that is saying much, for the typical woman of the French *bourgeoisie* has an excellent head for *affaires*. Yet Madame is affable to her customers, and from her high throne smiles expansively and nods a greeting to each as they enter. Her most austere moods occur at those times when a succession of five-franc notes finds its way into the till, necessitating the giving of change: then her manner becomes frigid in the extreme. All French shopkeepers are reluctant to change five-franc notes, and in consequence one begins to think of these in the same terms as ten-pound notes, although their value is only three and sevenpence.

Madame is not so gifted lingually as Henri. Her English vocabulary, so far as I know, comprises four words only. But these she uses every night and at the same moment according to

the clock. The very instant that the minute hand proclaims it to be eight o'clock, Madame's voice resounds shrilly through the room—"Eighto-cloke!" And a moment later—"Time, pleece!"

That is the signal for all British soldiers to withdraw and betake themselves to their billets. Should one delay for even a few moments a military policeman pops his head in the doorway and gives utterance to the identical words that Madame has used: and thereby one learns how Madame acquired her mastery of the English tongue.

. . . . . .

M'sieu le Maire is a portly individual and jolly, as all portly individuals should be. His cheeks are of a jolly red colour, his eyes have a jolly twinkle that even communal worries have been unable to quench, and his mouth, when it is not hidden by the huge black bowl of his favourite pipe, is seen to be expressive of jollity too.

Yet his life for the past twenty months has been one of many cares. At first there was the danger and the likelihood that the town would be overrun by the German hordes, and when that evil had been averted by the gallantry of the troops there was need for the wise and far-

seeing conduct of communal affairs, to reassure the people and to set them an example in municipal thrift and efficiency. Now he has to assist the British military authorities by every means in his power to secure billets for the troops, while at the same time safeguarding the interests of the populace, and it need hardly be said that these negotiations call for the display of infinite tact and resource. Also, *M'sieu le Maire's* two sons have been in the fighting line since the war began, and both have been wounded. Yet his good humour and flow of cheerful spirits have never abated.

The war is long, he says: the time is a sad and anxious one for all: but the end will be worth all the pain and sacrifice: no matter what price we pay, it will be cheap when measured with the result, which is the liberation of Europe.

I have visited the home of *M'sieu le Maire* and met there the gracious lady who is his wife. In her own way she is no less active than her husband in the cause of France; her days are spent in the service of various charitable organisations in aid of the French troops. The first time I entered the *salon* I found her seated at the window intent on mending some garments for one of her sons at the front.

M'sieu has a hobby : he is collecting souvenirs of the sojourn of the British soldiers in the town. His collection of cap badges, shoulder numerals, tunic buttons, etc., is the largest and most comprehensive that I have ever seen in the possession of a private individual. It is his intention to present them to the local museum after the war, when they will be to future generations a witness and a memento of the days when the town harboured within its bounds the friendly warriors of *Angleterre*.

One evening *M'sieu* and I went to a theatre together. Lest you have an erroneous conception of the place I should add that it was an old riding school, and comprised four bare brick walls, a roof, and an earthen floor. But a stage had been erected at one end, with a curtain that rolled up and down, rough benches had been brought in, and—Voilà ! A theatre ! French civilians were only admitted when accompanied by British soldiers, and on this particular evening *M'sieu le Maire* was my protegé. The play, which was presented by the officers and men of a regiment stationed here, was an ambitious production, and was in the nature of a revue. It was an aggregation or a hash-up of scenes from various revues now running in London, the humour being specially adapted for soldiers.

Costumes had been imported from London, scenery had been specially painted, the "prettiest" men of the battalion had assiduously studied all the tricks of femininity for weeks on end, and now, arrayed in the shortest and fluffiest of frocks, they reproduced them for the benefit of their pals. *M'sieu le Maire* was enchanted; if he did not understand much of the dialogue he appreciated the bright music and the dancing and the impassioned love-making. (There's always plenty of this last when the heroine is a soldier.) He sat with his opera glasses fixed to his eyes and chuckled to himself; he laughed loud and long whenever the audience laughed, and often when every other soul but himself was silent; and none applauded so frequently or vigorously as he.

"That was good—very good," said he, when at eight o'clock we were taking our homeward way. "It is the first play I have seen since the war began. If only Madame could have come, how she would have amused herself! It is so gay, so lively—one forgets that there is a war. And these demoiselles so charming, so adorable. O, là, là! You English are such droll fellows, such *comiques!* It is to laugh!"

THE PROMOTION OF PUDD'N.

I suppose that in some dim recess of my mind I must have known that he bore some other name. But I never heard it, and having no curiosity in the matter I never enquired. I was quite satisfied—and so apparently was he—with the name by which he was known to his platoon mates. "Pudd'n"—pronounced to rhyme with "sudden"—has many good qualities to commend it as a cognomen. It is instinct with poetry—it is live and tremulous with association—it is close-clustered with sweetly poignant memories. Moreover, its syllable and a half contain no stumbling-block for the untrained or the unwary tongue. It is easily said, and has unwonted possibilities of varied expression—especially of emphasis and of gusto. Anyhow, I think it a name quite as suitable for a man as Johnny, or Willie, or Bobby.

To the platoon, then, Pudd'n is just Pudd'n—that and no more: Gussie alone affects a different appellation for our messmate, and calls him "Pooding"—carefully stressing the

final "g." But that is only Gussie's Kelvinside facetiousness.

Pudd'n, I may say, hails from a district of Glasgow which he calls "the Pos'l," and previous to August 4, 1914, he justified his claim to existence by selling boots in a city warehouse. To-day Pudd'n is a soldier—and one to whom any man might be proud to doff his hat. During the seventeen months that he has served in France he has played the game to the top of his bent. His hands have burned and his back has ached hundreds of times from his zealous toil with the pick and shovel; there has never been an occasion when volunteers were asked for a dangerous job that Pudd'n has not offered himself; as a cool and skilful bomber he has been "over the parapet" more times than are generally permitted to the majority of his kind; once he was wounded in the head by a German bullet, and a month later he was in the trenches again, ready as ever to play a hazardous part.

No amount of German strafeing or of Army stew can serve to alter Pudd'n's ineradicable good nature or his habitual calm. To quote but one instance—I remember a day when a heavy shell landed immediately in front of our trench, and brought down a goodly part of the parapet. Three of us, who were in an adjacent part of the

trench, ran round the traverse that separated us from the scene of the disaster. But we did not find what we had fearfully expected. Pudd'n was there certainly—but Pudd'n very much alive. He was partly buried beneath sandbags and earth, but with his free limbs he was making frantic endeavours to extricate himself. By a miracle he was unhurt, and when we had set him free his only remark—delivered in the most casual tones—was, "Well, to hell wi' that for a pantomime! They nearly did the dirty on me there. Ah wunner if ma smoke-helmet goggles are broken."

In the same circumstances another man would probably have had to retire behind the lines for a day or two to recover from nervous shock. But not so Pudd'n! A half-hour later he took his spell of look-out duty, just as though such things as nerves didn't exist.

. . . . . .

Gussie was holding aloft a candle, and by its light the Orderly Sergeant was reading aloud the battalion orders for the following day. The rest of the platoon—some of us already outstretched on the floor, others unfolding groundsheets or unbuckling kilts—listened attentively from the shadowed recesses of the stable that was our billet.

The Sergeant's voice was loud as he read—

"4. The Commanding Officer is pleased to make the following appointment, with effect from this date:—

"No. 1234 Pte. A. B. Brown, D Coy., to be Acting Lance-Corporal (unpaid)."

Amid the buzz of conversation that followed the Sergeant's departure, the voice of the Sanitary Man of the platoon was heard asking, "Wha's Private Abey Broon, the new Lance-Jack? Ah never heard o' um afore."

And a Lewis Gunner replied, "Oh, some nut in another platoon that's been sucking in with his Sergeant."

Whereupon the voice of Pudd'n resounded —"Awa' an' raffle yersel'! It's me 'at's got the stripe."

And then, as one man, the platoon arose from its several beds and showered congratulations upon Pudd'n. It cost us nothing—and, besides, we all liked Pudd'n.

. . . . . .

Next morning, as I was greasing my boots with the fatty remnants of the ham which had been issued to me for a breakfast ration, I heard a shrill voice piping—"Dilly Mile, Ker-r-roneecal, Aikspraiss, Nuyorkee-rald," and I knew—though one unaccustomed to the sounds cer-

tainly would not—that a French newsboy was outside selling English papers. Gussie and I subscribed a penny each, and the combined sums sufficed to buy one halfpenny paper. Erchie also got one in exchange for a tin of plum and apple jam which he commandeered from another mess—without that mess's knowledge or sanction, of course.

Gussie opened the sheet and ran his eye over the headlines.

"Tut, tut!" said he a minute or two later. "Most extraordinary thing! Not a word about it."

"About what?" I queried innocently.

"Why, about the important change in the Western Command — elevation of a humble private to a position of commanding eminence—the amazing and romantic story of Private Pudding—how he had greatness thrust upon him!—starting to take off his clothes one night as a private, ere he had reached his shirt he had blossomed into a full Unpaid Acting Lance-Corporal—jumped from the ranks to fame and fortune and influence at a single bound! Think of the emotional possibilities in a story like that!—the human appeal! And then to think that Lord Northcliffe missed it! Huh! after this I'll go to the pages of the 'Expositor' or

the ' Hibbert Journal ' when I want real yellow sensationalism !"

Pudd'n was operating on his rifle with a " pull-through " during this oration, and his smiling mouth was like a slice of water melon for shape and size.

" Aw, chuck it, Gussie," he expostulated with the utmost good humour. " Ah didna waant the stripe. It wisna ma faut I got it."

And Erchie said, " Here, that's yesterday's paper so the news couldna be in it. Wait till the morn's mornin' an' we'll see Pudd'n's fotey —bokoo foteys o' him at different stages o' his life—and we'll hae Horatio Bull prophesyin' that the war's boun' to en' noo by the Glesca Fair."

That afternoon Pudd'n " put up his stripe."

Sitting upon the edge of the manger in the billet he, with the aid of his " housewife," adorned each sleeve of his tunic with a " dog's leg "; thereafter he, with modest pride, wrote an account of his sudden elevation and of the additional and brain-wearing responsibilities which it entailed, to that fair charmer of " the Pos'l " whom he was pleased to designate " the tert."

In the evening he swanked it mightily in an estaminet that was a favourite haunt of the

members of his platoon—stood treat to all his pals in the matter of *pommes de terre frites* and *vin blanc* (after having borrowed ten francs from Gussie to defray the costs)—and was asked by no fewer than fourteen jealous privates if the Quartermaster was now issuing stripes with the daily rations.

. . . . . .

For the next few days Pudd'n attended a N.C.O.'s class presided over by "The Big F'lah" —as the Regimental Sergeant-Major is quite accurately and not disrespectfully designated by the men. While the battalion perspired—or as Erchie succinctly expressed it, "nearly knocked its pan oot"—in the pleasing diversions of platoon drill or Swedish "jerks," a score or so of young N.C.O.'s were stationed in a corner of the field yelling themselves hoarse. They weren't yelling at anything or anybody in particular—they just bayed the moon, as it were; while the Sergeant-Major aided, abetted, and discouraged them in especially piquant phrases that are the copyright possession of the Warrant Officers' Trades Union. What it was they were shouting I don't know; the chorusing voices produced such a strange and inharmonious medley of sound that no words were distinguishable, but it was generally supposed among the privates

that the N.C.O.'s were practising those words of command and exhortation especially in favour with their class—such as "Spar about, you fullahs!"—"Show a leg there!"—"Corporal to you, please!"—"Buzz off!"—"And the time is one—one, two!" etc.

It was also conjectured that the S.-M. was instructing his class in the judicious selection and employment of those adjectival phrases which are the peculiar property of N.C.O.'s—the hallmark of their calling—and which are never seen in print, the presumable reason being that type melts when subjected to too great a heat.

Anyhow, Pudd'n made one of the noisy, shouting mob, and on his return to the billet his voice was a mere husky whisper.

"An' they ca' this 'restin','" he croaked, as he sat down violently on his pack and leaned his head on his hands in utter fatigue. "Ah'd a stricken sicht sooner be in the trenches."

At tea-time Erchie reported that in a quiet street of the town he had come across Pudd'n practising the tricks of his new rank—that he had distinctly heard him adjure a post lamp to "spar about and don't come the 'old soldier' game with me!"

"An' Pudd'n," said Erchie in tones of admiration, "man, ye did it fine! If Dougie Haig

could juist ha' heard ye he'd hae fair rummelt in his shoon, for he'd hae seen himself oot o' a job in a wee while. An' efter the war it's the rare an' smert manager o' the shop you'll mak'. Ah think ah can juist hear ye orderin' aboot the salesweemen.—'Hi, Miss Robison, show a leg there! Here's a customer in!'"

. . . . . .

For one brief week Pudd'n maintained his equilibrium on the dizzy height to which the fortunes of war had thrust him. And then——!

Well, it was like this. A few weeks previous to the events hereinbefore chronicled, there was a certain private in the platoon to which Pudd'n lent distinction. And there was a good deal of the "old soldier" about this private—he had a conscientious objection to doing any work if another fellow could do it instead. He scamped, he dodged, he shirked—and he kept religiously for his own sole enjoyment the butter which came in his parcels from home. Wherefore he was not a popular personage with his platoon-mates. But inasmuch as his father pulled certain wires, the private was duly gazetted and appointed to a commission in the battalion in which he was already serving. Thereafter he departed unto a school for officers, conducted a few miles behind the lines — and soon after

Pudd'n's promotion he returned to the battalion, with his single star in the ascendant. And two days later Pudd'n's blaze of glory was suddenly snuffed out.

To go into the detail of the incident—Pudd'n was on Quarter-Guard; and as he stood outside the door of the guard-room aimlessly watching the sentry on duty, a crisp voice sounded behind him—

"Corporal, go over and tell that sentry to straighten up. He's slouching."

And Pudd'n's reply was, "Awa' an' tak' a runnin' jump to yersel'! The man's fine."

Next morning the Sergeant-Major piloted him into the Orderly Room in this breathless fashion —"Prisoner and escort, Quick March! Right Turn! Left Turn! Halt! Right Turn!" And Pudd'n found himself, bareheaded, facing the Colonel, while the other Officers stood ranged around the room.

When he quitted the Orderly Room the sleeves of his tunic were bare of any adornment —he was no longer of "the backbone of the British Army."

He explained the matter in the billet. "Ah clean forgot he wis an officer noo, an' ah clean forgot ah wis a Lance-Jack. When ah heard his v'ice ah thocht he wis juist kiddin' me, so

ah yapped back at 'um. Ah weel! Ah've lost my stripe, but it saved me a' the same. If ah hadna had a stripe to lose ah'd likely have got 21 days F.P. Number One f'ae the C.O. Ach, ah'd raither be a private, onyway!"

Thus it was that Pudd'n renounced his dreams of military fame and glory, and resigned himself to the obscurity of the ranks.

THE RAID.

JUNE 27TH, 1916.

"A particularly successful raid was carried out by the Highland Light Infantry, when 46 *prisoners and* 2 *machine guns were captured and* 2 *enemy mine shafts destroyed, with the loss of only* 12 *men wounded."—British Official Communique.*

. . . . . .

Rat-tat-a-tat!

A German machine gun chattered, and a spray of bullets hissed through the air.

Wo-o-of! A *minenwerfer* exploded between the British first and second lines, a little to the right of our position, and for an instant the darkness was dispersed by the angry burst of flame.

Rat-a-tat-tat!

Some bullets drove—*zip!*—into our sand-bagged parapet, and the young officer of R.E., wedged tightly in the sap amid a crowd of our fellows, chuckled softly. He lit a cigarette with a patent lighter, and by its glow Pudd'n, who

was his neighbour, saw that his eyes were twinkling in appreciation of some joke.

Rat-tat-a-tat! said the machine gun again.

"Go it, my hearty!" said the R.E. officer; "you've got exactly eight minutes to spit your blinking venom, and then——" he chuckled and turned to Pudd'n. "You hear that blamed chatterbox? And you know that there's a Boche working it? Well, our friend Fritz there is sitting right on top of umpteen pounds of high explosive, and"—a chuckle—"he doesn't know it. And he never will know it, for in about eight minutes that mine is going to go up—up—up,—and so is our friend Fritz and his machine gun."

Rat-a-tat-tat-tat!

There was subtle meaning as well as width in Pudd'n's smile as he turned to his other neighbour and imparted the little joke to him; but only a very faint smile rewarded him, for his neighbour was in that state of nervousness peculiar to members of recently joined drafts who are about to go over the parapet for the first time.

Then there was a movement in front, and the party moved forward up the sap. At the end there were steps formed of sandbags that led up to the surface of the earth. The officer

in command of the party stood there and said in low tones to the men as they filed past him —"Good luck, boys!—good luck! Creep well out, but be sure to keep in touch. And keep well down while the bombardment's on. Cheeroh! Good luck!"

When they had reached the top of the world they found themselves in the middle of No Man's Land—far beyond our own barbed wire defences. On all fours, with the utmost stealth and caution, they crawled in single file through the long damp grass, and when the whispered word was passed along that the last man was out of the sap they lay still and awaited developments.

From other saps other men had similarly emerged, until now there stretched in three rows between the opposing lines of trenches a hundred and fifty silent figures. An occasional rocket from the German lines bathed them in light, but they remained unseen and undisturbed.

Rat-a-tat-tat!

A stream of bullets sang menacingly above them.

Gussie's hand trembled ever so slightly in its hold on the bucket of bombs that lay beside him. He whispered to Pudd'n, whose head was close to his:—"I don't think much of No Man's

Land as a health resort—I'd rather have Blackpool. Hear that damned machine gun ?"

Pudd'n thought of what the R.E. officer had told him, and smiled and said nothing.

Whong !

The world shuddered, then heaved violently—there was an immense burst of jagged yellow flame mottled with dark masses—a stunning roar and a fierce, tearing wind—then the thud-thudding of heavy objects on the ground, and the pitter-patter of falling earth and debris.

Pudd'n got no opportunity to assure himself that the machine gun was silent, for immediately after the explosion of the mine there was a shrieking overhead as of a train with brakes tight pressed grinding to a stop. And the enemy trenches were lit up by a succession of belches of angry flame, to the accompaniment of a series of violent explosions as rapid as the crackle of a machine gun. Our artillery sprinkled shrapnel and high explosive shells over the enemy's trenches as thickly as pepper shaken from a pepper pot, until it seemed as though nothing could live in that infernal zone of spitting fire and flying steel.

The raiders lay in the flickering twilight—the twilight of the bursting shells—and watched and waited—and waited.

Thus did five minutes—ten minutes—pass: still they waited — each man with his own thoughts for company. And this was the time of their greatest ordeal—lying passive and silent, with eyes fixed on the suburb of Hell that they must soon enter. The German guns were replying vigorously to our bombardment, but their shells were passing over the raiders and were bursting in our first and second lines of trenches.

A shouted whisper passed along the line—"Move forward as far as you can safely go."

They crawled and wriggled over the ground until the hum of flying splinters from our own shells and the *z-zog!* as these ploughed into the earth close by, warned them to go no further.

The scene was now as light as day—a wan and ghostly day—for the upper air was scintillant with star rockets that soared and drifted and fell to earth again in prodigal profusion.

A man glanced at the watch on his wrist.

"One minute more!"

A weakness seemed to seize on all his limbs, his heart drove against his ribs with a rapid, sickening stroke, a mist was before his eyes. He strove to pull himself together—clenched his teeth and winked his eyes rapidly and swallowed hard—"You've got to go through with it, you

know," he kept telling himself. And suddenly his mind cleared, and the strength returned to his limbs: he saw only the task that lay ahead, and a raw, primitive eagerness beset him: he itched to be up and off about his work: cool, alert, tense, he waited—a hundred and fifty of him.

Whong!

A second mine had been exploded immediately under the crater formed by a previous and similar eruption. Two of our men had been lying almost on the lip of this old crater, and the shock of the explosion uplifted and hurled them bodily through the air for a distance of many yards. They lay moaning in their distress.

But their companions, immediately the great flame shot upwards, were on their feet and, some cheering madly, some in grim silence, were racing hell-for-leather towards the German trenches, the debris of the mine showering down upon them as they ran.

. . . . . .

Some leaped straightway into the crater of the mine, and lo! it was littered with dead and dying men. A working party of Germans had been engaged in fortifying the old crater at the moment that the mine had burst beneath them —and now they sprawled in gruesomely unnatural

attitudes amid the debris, half buried beneath it, and either silent everlastingly or making strange animal moans. The few who were able to move turned and fled towards their own trenches the instant their affrighted eyes saw the Highlanders leaping pell-mell into their midst—and, with a yell, our boys were after them with bomb and bayonet.

In places the barbed wire defences before the German lines had not been entirely destroyed by our artillery, and many of the raiders were caught and held in the tangled strands. Only for an instant, however, for with an utter recklessness of personal hurt they tore their way through it, so that ere they reached the enemy parapet the kilts and puttees of many were in tatters, and their legs torn and dripping blood. But at the moment they were hardly aware that they had even been scratched.

By this time the nature of our artillery bombardment had changed, and instead of shells being scattered profusely over the entire enemy front they now formed a barrage or a crescent curtain of fire around the area being attacked. This portion was thus effectively isolated from the rest of the enemy's front, for reinforcements from either flank or from the rear could only be brought in through a storm of shrapnel and high explosive shells.

Our boys swarmed into the German first line, and within two minutes it was theirs by right of conquest.

Two bombs deftly thrown put a machine gun and its crew out of action.

A Corporal landed in the trench within two yards of a lusty German. The latter lunged with his bayonet—but the Corporal parried the thrust and savagely swung the butt of his own rifle upward. It caught the German on the point of the chin, and he dropped like a felled ox.

Erchie—who, two years ago, spent weary days in toiling up endless flights of stairs to deliver His Majesty's mail — encountered a German rounding the corner of a traverse : a moment later Erchie continued on his way, but his bayonet was dark and wet, and his heart surged with a fierce, unholy exultation.

Pudd'n was suddenly confronted by a German at close quarters—and Pudd'n's only weapons were bombs. But someone — surely it was Providence ! — had placed on the firing-step, within a few feet of our warrior, a heavy wooden mallet. By the light of his electric torch Pudd'n glimpsed it—and in an instant had seized it and swung it high above his head—then drove it with smashing force full into the other's face.

Those who were not actually engaged in hand-to-hand conflict with the enemy started straightway to bomb the dug-outs. Steep flights of steps, cut to a depth of from thirty to forty feet, gave access to these underground tunnels. Our men threw a bomb or two down the stairs, and, after the explosion, "Hoch, kamarad!" they shouted, or "Allez, you blighters, allez!"

Sometimes two, sometimes three or more, Germans then crawled from their holes and up the steps, and, arriving in the trench, threw up their hands in token of surrender. Many were dazed with the shock of the bomb explosions; others were in a state of abject terror and, flinging themselves on their knees, whimpered "Mercy, kamarad!"

One of our men was preparing to throw a bomb into a dug-out when, in the glare of his electric torch, he saw a middle-aged German, bearded of face and bald of head, laboriously climbing the stairs. The Highlander waited. When he had almost reached the level of the trench the German's unsuspecting eyes suddenly lit on the kilt of his enemy. A look of incredulous bewilderment overspread his features—a look that changed to one of horror and fear as his eyes travelled slowly upward and over the khaki tunic. His jaw dropped, a gasp that was almost

a sob escaped his lips, and he fell on his knees and whined and babbled for mercy.

Unceremoniously the prisoners were hustled and frog-marched along the trench.

A section of the raiders darted up the communication trench leading to the enemy's second line, clearing the way before them by means of bombs. Into the second line they went, killing everyone who offered any resistance, taking prisoners those who surrendered themselves, and bombing every dug-out.

Fifteen minutes after the first of the Highlanders had entered the enemy trenches they were in complete possession of them—or at least in possession of these portions of the two front lines isolated by our artillery barrage. It was their duty to hold these lines for an hour, and to inflict every possible damage on them.

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So swift was the despatch of any German who showed signs of fight, and so thoroughly was the bombing of the dug-outs carried out, that most of the enemy who were lucky enough to survive this latter ordeal were completely cowed and surrendered themselves eagerly.

While Pudd'n was peering into the gloomy depths of a dug-out he felt someone tap his shoulder from behind. He turned and saw a

German. "Prisonerr — prisonerr — me!" said Fritz, holding his hands above his head. "Kamerad—me!"

"Allez, you blighter, allez!—Shoo!" Pudd'n spoke to him much as he might have done to an obtrusive hen—then, catching him by the nape of the neck, raced him along the trench at full speed, without taking any undue care as he swung him round the corners of the traverses.

"Mon Joo! this is easier than liftin' yer pey," said Pudd'n, as he handed over his prisoner to an escort. "It's a shame to tak' the money for't . . . *an'* the glory."

The comparative ease with which they had overcome the enemy exhilarated the men: they were elated, overflowing with animal spirits.

A bugler rushed up to the officer in command of the party and, seizing his hand, wrung it vigorously.

"Eh, whit de ye think o' Nummer Fower Company noo, Sir? Good auld Nummer Fower! Eh, man, is it no' champion? Luk at a' thae blighters skelpin' along like rabbits, wi' only yin o' oor men ahint them! O crivens, it's a terr richt enough!"

Ere the officer could stop him the bugler had seized hold of a rifle and bayonet left by a wounded man, had scrambled over the parapet,

and had attached himself as escort to a band of German prisoners being herded over No Man's Land towards our trenches.

"Allez, ye blighters, allez! Hoch!" shouted the bugler.

Like a flock of frightened sheep they scampered over No Man's Land, little Five-Foot-Nothing behind them yelling encouragement, and occasionally administering it to the laggards with his boot or his bayonet.—"Faster, ye blinkin' sods! Faster! Come on, auld Baldy-heid, ye'll be last."

When the men in our front line saw the party approaching they started to cheer, and shouted further encouragement.—"Come on Fritz, we're waitin' for ye. . . . At the double, man! . . . Hooray!"

The chaser and the chased tumbled precipitately into the trench.

One of the Germans was the middle-aged man, bald and bearded, of whom mention has already been made. When he had picked himself up from the bottom of the trench, he suddenly put his hands over his face and began to weep.

The Bugler regarded him for a moment in wide-eyed amazement, and then—pity overcame him. He forgot that the man was a foe: remembered only that he was a fellow-being in

distress : for, going up to the German he patted him encouragingly on the shoulder, and whispered, " Stick it, auld son ; you're a' richt noo." Then he returned to the German trenches to escort back more prisoners.

No Man's Land had now become quite a populous highway, for parties were constantly passing between the two hostile lines of trenches escorting bands of prisoners, carrying over captured booty such as machine guns, rifles, equipment, etc., or else returning from these errands.

On the firing-step of the German trench sat two of our signallers beside a telephone apparatus. Two minutes after the raiders had reached their objective the signallers had " connected " with Battalion Headquarters, and were relating over the wire the successful capture of the enemy trench. Now they kept up a running commentary on the progress of events—making the Headquarters Staff cognisant of every incident at the moment of its happening. Shells were whistling and screaming over their heads, and the roar of the explosions was continuous, but the nonchalance of the two signallers was complete. Had they been reporting a football match their excitement would have been much greater.

"Another batch of five prisoners is being escorted over.—The sappers have discovered a mine-shaft and are preparing to blow it up.—They've blown it up.—The front line is entirely in our hands now; there are no more Allemands left in it, except the dead and wounded down in the dug-outs.—No, we've no idea how many of the enemy have been killed, but there must be a devil of a lot of them. One of the prisoners says there were about twenty men in his dug-out, and after it was bombed he was the only one able to crawl out. He says the others were heaped around him dead and dying.—Three more prisoners are on their way down from the second line; that makes thirty-eight now. And another machine gun has been found and is being dismantled.—Nothing at all doing just now; the boys are hunting round for souvenirs."

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When the allotted time had expired forty-six prisoners had been safely escorted over to our own lines, besides two complete enemy machine guns, and a miscellaneous collection of rifles, revolvers, bayonets, anti-gas helmets, and other equipment; two mine-shafts and numerous dug-outs had been destroyed, and the trenches broken down and their fortifications rendered useless as far as was possible.

Then above all the din of the bursting shells a bugle call rang thin and clear — and was repeated many times. It was the signal for the raiders—those of them who had penetrated into the enemy's second line of trenches—to retire to the first line.

But little Five-Foot-Nothing, the bugler, was not satisfied with his performance. The prearranged signal did not suffice to express all the exuberant joy that possessed him; and, putting his bugle to his lips, he blew another call—which, when they heard it shrill above the din of battle, set a-laughing all the raiders in the enemy's trenches and their waiting pals in the British lines. For "Come to the cookhouse door, boys!" was the call that the bugler played.

A few minutes later the clear shrilling blasts of a whistle were heard, and at the signal the raiders leapt over the enemy parapet, and set out on the return to their own trenches. The instructions had been that they were to crawl back on all fours, but in this one particular only was authority set at naught that night and instructions disregarded. It had not been foreseen that not a single German capable of firing a shot would be left in that part of the enemy front, and in this unexpected circumstance the need for caution was eliminated—or nearly so.

The return of the raiders to their own trenches resembled more than anything else the return of a football team to its own half of the field after a particularly hot scrimmage around the enemy's goalposts resulting in a hard won goal. They ran hither and thither in gleeful excitement, shaking each other by the hand, and all talking rapidly in high pitched voices; some danced and capered; one essayed to turn a Catherine wheel; the bugler and his pal strutted arm in arm, a little round German forage cap perched perkily on each of their heads, while their free hands brandished aloft their own steel helmets, which they clanked together in the manner of cymbals as accompaniment to the song that they sang full-throatedly—the refrain of which was to the effect that—

"D Compan-y is the finest Compan-y
That ever—came out of—the H.L.I."

It was surely as strange a crossing of No Man's Land as was ever made.

On reaching the sap-heads from which they had originally emerged, the raiders clambered into the saps, and thence made their way into their own trenches.

At one moment there was a slight delay as some of the raiders were clustered around the

sap-head. A German prisoner in the sap was blocking the way; either from fear or from animal stubbornness he refused to move forward. It was no occasion for argument: the men above were waiting to get into the shelter of the trench, and at any moment it might be expected that the Germans, having regained possession of their front line, would open fire.—A pistol shot rang out, and the party descended into safety.

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Half-an-hour later, when the raiders were displaying their souvenirs — rifles, revolvers, bayonets, anti-gas helmets, forage caps, buttons, German newspapers, and what not—before the eyes of their envious comrades, and when they were relating with gusto and adjectival artistry the incidents of the raid, the sound of bombing in the German trenches was heard.

"O hokey! listen to that," cried one; "they're bombin' their way up the communication trench to the front line noo, an' there's no sae much as the button o' a Hielander in the place. O hokey! whit a bawr! That's a guid ane!"

Still later the enemy plastered our trenches with shrapnel and high explosive as a return for the ill we had wrought him, and by a strange irony the only result of this bombardment was

that one of the German prisoners being escorted down a communication trench was hit and killed instantaneously. A volunteer party, consisting of the sturdy Regimental Pioneers, was struggling up the communication trench with dixies of hot tea for the raiders, and experienced the full force of this intense bombardment; but, almost by a miracle, no man of them was injured, and the raiders received the precious tea while it was still piping hot.

Immediately they arrived in our lines the prisoners were conducted to Battalion Headquarters, a dug-out between our second and third lines of trenches, and there they were systematically searched and deprived of any documents or articles that might yield information of value. Questions were asked of them concerning their units and Army formations, and these were generally answered readily enough.

The first ten or twelve prisoners stood huddled together in a side trench, with armed sentries over them, waiting—they knew not what. A thin rain was falling, and in their wet clothes they looked cold and dejected and infinitely miserable. One of them wore no shirt under his damp tunic, and his teeth chattered and his limbs shivered with the cold. Some of

the younger men—mere boys—wept quietly when they thought themselves unobserved.

One of the latter leaned heavily against the trench as though in weariness; occasionally he slipped down a little, and would then pull himself together again; a sentry flashed on him the light of an electric torch, and it revealed his face as white and drawn. "Poor little beggar," thought the sentry, "he's all out with fatigue." Then a comrade, an older man, put his arm around the boy to support him, and whispered to him encouragingly. The lad's head fell on the friendly shoulder, and he began to sob pitifully. A question from his companion elicited a faint answer—and the older man began to talk excitedly in German to the sentry, who grasped sufficiently the sense of the words to understand that the boy had been wounded by a bayonet. Immediately he was carried into a dug-out and his wound dressed—only just in time, for he was bleeding and had bled profusely. Under the surveillance of a guard he was allowed to lie there on a heap of sandbags until such time as he could be carried away on a stretcher. Other wounded prisoners similarly had their hurts attended to, and the knowledge of this seemed to revive a little the spirits of their comrades. Probably they argued that,

since this care was being taken of their wounded, their lives were to be spared.

The prisoners as they came down the trenches were in a state of the utmost nervousness and fear, and it was obvious that they dreaded the approach of every armed Highlander, not knowing what it might portend. Not infrequently, when a prisoner rounded a traverse and came suddenly upon a Highlander, his arm rose protectingly as though to ward off a blow, and he shrank and cowered in to the wall of the trench. But this diffidence wore off in part when they experienced from their captors a marked consideration and kindness. They were huddled together in dug-outs, sheltered alike from rain and from fragments of flying shell; cigarettes were offered to them, and drinking water; conversation was carried on by means of Tommy's own peculiar mixture of Anglo-French and of expressive gesture, which, if the Germans did not wholly understand, they knew at least to be friendly in intention.

Our prisoners were a heterogeneous collection —boys in their teens, men in all the splendour of robust youth, men of mature years, men whose features bore the stamp of education and refinement, and dull boorish clowns; men of fine physique, and others but ill-developed.

One spoke English perfectly; he had been in the United States for seven years, and at the outbreak of war was on a business trip to Germany: he was conscripted against his will, and forced to fight for the Fatherland.

"Well, are you glad you've been made a prisoner and are out of the war?" a Highlander asked him.

He shrugged his shoulders slightly.

"That is a question that a man does not answer. But one doesn't grumble at anything in war. It's the luck of the game. And one has got to take it like a man."

Later, he said in reference to the success of our raid, "It was well done—your plans must have been carefully made and carried out to the letter. We didn't get a chance to show much fight. You were in our trenches and killing and stunning us with bombs before we knew the artillery bombardment was over. You Scotsmen have plenty of dash and bravery.—Oh, yes, it was well done."

Other prisoners were mainly concerned with asking, "Me go Angland?" And on receiving a reply in the affirmative, "Good! good!" they ejaculated gleefully and burst into rapid and excited converse with their fellow-captives.

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A few days later Erchie was discussing the raid—acknowledged by G.H.Q. to have established a record, in point of view of material results, for any single battalion. But Erchie was not concerned with the glory accruing to him and his comrades; he was thinking of the captured Germans.

"I suppose," he said, "that thae blinkin' Allemands 'll be in Blighty by this time. The lucky bounders!"

A BILLET IN ARCADY.

There are billets and billets — oh! such billets!

Those immediately behind the trenches are usually mere husks of buildings. Once upon a time they may have been village schools or dwelling-houses or barns or stables—but now they are ruins: that and nothing more. They are not picturesque, and their powers of protection against rain or wind or shrapnel are woefully limited. Sometimes, it is true, they possess a certain interest for zoologists: I have seen Tommies, whom you would never have suspected of a passion for natural history, hunting around, ardent and lynx-eyed, for some of the "specimens" that their billet harboured.—But that is another story.

Often our billets are lofts above outhouses, and having roofs so low that one is compelled to adopt always the "half-shut knife" attitude so abhorred of Army instructors. The frequent sudden contact of one's head with the rafters develops one's "bumps" and bad temper. A

small square opening in the gable of the house gives access to the loft. Situated just under the arch of the roof, and far above a man's head, it looks like the entrance to a dove-cot. To reach the platoon's bed-sitting-room one has to climb a ricketty ladder—(the ladders we obtain on these occasions are invariably ricketty and have several rungs missing)—and then warily crawl or wriggle through the hole in the wall. As it is obviously impossible to hoist a dixy to our eyrie, meals are issued on the ground at the foot of the ladder. Then will you see Highlanders performing the most fantastic equilibristic feats. Balancing two mess-tins of stew in each hand, and with one dangling from his teeth, a man steers a perilous course up the shaky ladder, at the same time trying to dodge the heels of the preceding man and the gravy that splashes from his mess-tins, and to tell him, through tightly clenched teeth, exactly what he (the bottom dog) thinks of his clumsy efforts.

In districts further removed from the line there is greater variety in billets. Sometimes we have rested in a French military barracks, and again have lived in the atmosphere of culture that permeates a Ladies' College. A tobacco factory has been our dwelling place, and once we shivered o' nights in a tileworks where icy

draughts converged from every quarter of the globe.

But I am going to tell you of an occasion when I "clicked" for a billet out of the ordinary run.

The battalion had just finished a long spell in the trenches and, marching back, halted a night in a rural district remote from any town or village. There was difficulty in obtaining billets, and those eventually commandeered were scattered over a wide area.

The Headquarters Staff was billeted in the various outbuildings of a farm, the particular haven allotted to myself and some others being a small ramshackle barn with rough earthen floor, and already tenanted by a number of fowls. Immediately on arrival, being very tired and hungry, we set about "drumming up"—which, in the civilian tongue, means "getting tea ready." I was deputed to "square-push" Madame of the Farmhouse—to make myself pleasant to her, and then request the use of her fire to boil some water. Apparently I succeeded in making myself sufficiently agreeable to Madame, for she not only granted my request, but invited me and a fellow "square-pusher" to sleep in the farm kitchen for the night.

"Some billet you've clicked for! You're laughin' now," commented our messmates when

they learned: while one remarked that we had surely "pee-hee'd Madame to some tune." (To "pee-hee," I may explain, is Atkinsian for "to ingratiate one's self with"—"to suck in with.")

It was as quaint and picturesque a billet as any in which I have reposed my tired clay since coming to this country of strange and woeful contrasts. A great square room it was, with stone paved floor and a low raftered ceiling of dark oak. The fireplace, with its spacious ingle, entirely filled one end of the kitchen, and a big dresser covered with blue-patterned china masked the greater part of one wall. In a corner was a little *prie-dieu*, and on the walls hung several cheap lithographs of the Madonna and the Christ and some blue China plates.

On a projecting nail in one of the oaken beams of the ceiling swallows had builded a nest, and in the early morning, when Monsieur had thrown open the door, we were surprised by a sudden flutter of wings and two swift streaks of white as the parent birds flew out into the sunshine—the first intimation we had had of their presence in the room. All morning they flew in and out the low doorway, coming and going to and from the nest which held all their little world of hope, and paying not the slightest heed to the two humans, accoutred in all the

strange panoply of war, who shared the farm kitchen with them.

Behind the house was a cherry orchard with a "living river" flowing by the foot of it—a placid little burn all overhung with willows. And in the golden morning we bathed in its cool waters and completed our toilet in the orchard, our shaving mirrors stuck up on the gnarled trunks of the trees.

Followed one of the peacefullest, laziest days we had known for long. With a dozen others I lay on the green sward under a cherry tree in the orchard and wrote letters and amused myself with a French novel: and again did nothing but lie on my back and watch the lozenges of blue sky gleaming through the tangled greenery overhead—a greenery splashed with the splendid scarlet of the fruit. And all day long we ate cherries—for some of which we paid M'sieu the farmer, while others we stole from the trees; and, of course, these were the best and sweetest.

So the day wore to its close — a day of sunshine and peace and idle happiness. As subsequent events proved, it was the last such day that any of us were to know for long—the last that very many were ever to know.

For the soldier the road from Arcady to hell is often only a few hours' travel.

THE DOUBLE TURN.

"Warr and Batt" was the team name, and it was one to conjure with in the La Bassée sector of the British Front. It had only to figure on the programme of any Battalion entertainment for the success of that show to be assured. During a tedious spell in the trenches, when we were weary and fed-up almost to breaking point, we used to long mightily for the coming of that day when we should be relieved and would march back for a few days' rest in Bethune, and to thousands in the ——th Division the main pleasure in prospect, and to be anticipated with delight, was that of laughing over the drolleries of Warr and Batt. There was many a man in the Division who could not have told you the name of his Brigadier or Divisional General, but I doubt if, from the youngest private of the latest draft to the General himself, you could have found one who did not know Privates Tommy Warr and Alec Batt by name and reputation. On occasion they had even eased for a little the burden of care and responsibility

that devolves on the Commander-in-Chief, had smoothed the corrugations of worry from his brow and creased the corners of his lips in forgetful laughter, had put him in a merry humour and earned his spoken compliments. They were the chief factors in the great cause of cheering us all up.

It was rarely indeed that Warr and Batt had a free evening when the Glasgows were resting in Bethune, for their services were in continuous request for every concert that was organised. Often they were very tired and weary in body and mind after a harassing tour of duty in the trenches, and would fain have rested during the few days of respite, but rather than disappoint "the boys" they put aside their own personal inclinations and generously and ungrudgingly gave of their best. In doing so they had nothing to gain save the gratitude and goodwill of their fellows; their sole reward—and many a highly paid professional might have envied it—was in the miles of smiles they made to blossom along the British Front, in the hurricanes of laughter they evoked.

For Warr and Batt were artists in their own way — which was the way of "ragging and gagging" and cheerful buffoonery. The turns at the average regimental concert in France may

be said to range from "rotten" to "quite decent;" but Warr and Batt presented a double turn that was really good.

I have only to close my eyes and I can see them now:—Alec Batt — tall and of good presence, sartorially splendid, the typical stage beau—gliding round the stage with easy, sinuous movements, his hands and shoulders gently swaying in time to the melody of the ragtime ditty that he sings; and the shoulders of the audience rock in unison: little Tommy Warr, shuffling behind him, imitating with a ludicrous seriousness all his partner's poses and gestures in a spirit of eccentric naïveté quite inimitable. The latter was responsible for most of the humour of the performance, and he was the author of the majority of the "gags" relating to life in the Army and in the trenches—jokes that went the round of the whole Division and are still recalled with gusto in many a dug-out and bivouac. His breathless, lightning style reminded one not a little of that of the late Dan Leno: the verve and abandon that characterised everything he did, the little flashes that betrayed a keen perception of character as well as of the humorous, the irrepressible whirlwind jollity, were the same. Much of his business, many of his "gags," were extempore—conceived and fired off

on the spur of the moment—and rendered his partner as helpless with laughter as the remainder of the audience. On such occasions Tommy Warr's childlike expression of amazement and wonder and surprise was a delight to see.

As time passed their "double turn" became more elaborate and better in every way: in their leisure they were constantly rehearsing new "business" and new songs, these last being forwarded to them as soon as issued by a firm of London publishers: and their "properties" —of music, make-up, and dress—assumed quite bulky proportions. Needless to say, these were not carried in their knapsacks when the battalion was on the march: a place was gladly found for them in the horse transport. For Warr and Batt had become a regimental institution.

Then the authorities at Headquarters decided that our jesters rendered a greater service to the Empire by cheering our fellows up when they were resting than by going into the trenches themselves. So Warr and Batt, along with other clever entertainers, were stationed for several months in Bethune, and every evening throughout a Winter they performed there—in a building that had formerly been a church—and brought light and laughter into the lives of thousands of fighting sweds.

Their fame even travelled to Blighty, and I know that a certain vaudeville syndicate offered them a good engagement at its music halls when they should be discharged from the Army. But this they refused: they had no desire to become professional entertainers: their only wish was to do their "bit" in the war—by means of laughter to help other fellows to do theirs—and in the end to return to their city desks and go quietly all the rest of their days. Their success and popularity left them quite unspoiled and were reckoned by them as things of no moment: they remained ever the same modest, unassuming, light-hearted fellows—the friends of all the world.

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Now, there are only three things in life finer than the love of a man for a woman, and these are the love of a woman for a man, the love of a mother for her child, and the friendship—the love, if you like—existing between two men. And the last is not the least of the three.

Warr and Batt were good fellows—"steel-true and blade-straight"—and they were pals. Just that!—pals!—in all situations and in all circumstances—"through thick and thin—when luck was out, when luck was in!"

In the trenches and out—on the stage and off—they were inseparable. They were in the

same section of the same platoon—at work and at play they were together—they slept side by side—they shared everything they possessed: it was as natural for one to help the other in any way that offered as it was for him to joke about it. The high regard in which each held the other, the delight each found in the other's society, were apparent to all, but there was nothing mawkish in their relations—nothing of the spirit of a Mutual Admiration Society. They poked fun at each other constantly, and terms of abuse, delivered in a spirit of good-natured badinage, were more wont to pass between them than phrases superficially expressive of affection. Yet you knew that underneath all the gentle raillery Tommy Warr was thinking that Alec Batt was the finest chap in the world, and that Alec was thinking what a lovable and amusing little cuss his best pal was. For David and Jonathan were not more closely knit of soul than were these two.

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And in death they were not divided.

There came a morning—the 15th of July, 1916—when Warr and Batt, crouching shoulder to shoulder in a shallow ditch, heard the words —"Up, men!—over you go!" And as they scrambled up to the surface of the earth—"Good

luck, Tommy, lad!" said Alec Batt: "Good luck, old chap!" said Tommy Warr—then side by side they raced forward.

A hundred yards or so they advanced through a storm of bullets, then Tommy Warr suddenly crumpled and fell, and on the instant his pal was on his knees beside him. The little chap lay with wide unseeing eyes and moaned slightly as he breathed. Batt drew the limp form into the comparative shelter of a shell hole, and with frenzied haste loosened his equipment and clothing and fell to dressing his wound. And, having done that and not knowing what more to do, he chafed the nerveless hands and bathed the white brow with water from his bottle. He called to his pal by name—spoke to him in the soothing, sympathetic tones that one adopts to a sick child; but there was no response. Tommy's eyes had closed, his moans had ceased, and, but for his faint irregular breathing, he might have been dead.

On hands and knees two men crawled by, and, seeing Batt, advised him to return to the British lines: the attacking party had been almost wiped out—only a few remained—and it behoved every man now to try to save his own life. But Batt shook his head, and elected to remain beside his stricken friend in that shallow

pit under the brazen sky of morning, with streaming bullets and flying shell-splinters hissing their constant menace in his ear.

At last Tommy Warr's eyelids opened, and he lay awhile staring at his friend, but said no word.

"Cheeroh! Tommy lad," said Batt; "you'll soon be all right. I'm looking after you. . . . We'll wait a bit until things quieten and then I'll carry you back to our lines, and you'll be safe in Blighty before you realise it. . . . Does it hurt badly?"

The wounded man shook his head.

"Sure you're not in pain?"

Again he nodded assurance; then gradually a little playful smile trembled on his lips. Very faintly and haltingly—"Sorry, old chap," he whispered. "I'm—done for."

A pause, then the smile flickered again and he merely breathed—"This is the end . . . of our double turn: . . . not a bad end—is it—for me?" And yet a little later he gave the slightest perceptible pressure to the hand of his pal that lay in his. "So long, old chap!" said Tommy Warr—and never spoke again.

And these things I learned from the lips of Alec Batt himself, for he returned to the trenches in safety, bringing with him the dead body of

his friend, which he had placed on his outspread waterproof sheet and dragged by slow and painful inches over the bullet and shell-swept ground.

In the days that ensued Alec Batt wandered around like a lost soul on earth: his grief was plainly written on his face for all to see: his brooding eyes were eloquent of all his lips refused to say: he seemed a man for whom all the joy had gone out of life.

But it was not for long. Within a month an enemy shell had exacted the great toll from him too, and he had passed through the gates to join his waiting pal. And to-day their bodies lie within a few yards of each other near to the *Bois de Fourreaux* (High Wood).

AT THE SIGN OF THE RED TRIANGLE.

Now, Terry Kane was a troublesome fellow: his Company Commander said so, and it is not for me to contradict him. And, besides, it were idle to deny that Terry was wont to parade bare-headed before the C.O. with disturbing frequency.

As a rule, however, his offences were slight and usually derived from a disease of the throat —a peculiarly irritating dryness—to which he was subject when the battalion was in rest billets behind the line. In the trenches he was a good soldier, always ready to do his full share of the work on hand, and never prone to "windiness."

Also, he was a noted bruiser, with a host of triumphs in the ring to his credit, and the sledge-hammer punch that was latent in his calloused left had brought honour to the battalion on numerous occasions. Withal, he had a heart as simple as a child's and as kindly as a saint's.

If you should wonder how I—a mere writing fellow, whose pen holds no such punch as Terry's wondrous left—came to be on terms of such intimacy with this famous Bohemian and scrapper as to be his confidant in the delicate

matter hereinafter related, I may tell you that it was on account of a favour I once did for him.

Over the destinies of the kitchen in a villa situate in placid Pollokshields there presides a bright-eyed Irish lass who is happy—or ought to be—in the name of Monica Mary Boyle. (I know about the brightness of her eyes, because I have seen their glory reflected in the stamp photos. that Terry carried in the envelope of his pay-book.) It was to be near this syren that Terry forsook his native Kinsale in pre-war days, and settled (as far as one can settle there) in the wilds of Pollokshaws.

Once, when I was on Quarter-Guard at Annequin, I beguiled the tedium of the hours by writing a set of very amorous verses to Miss Monica Mary. They were written to the commission—at the pleading request—of Terry, who happened to be a prisoner in the Guard Room just then ; and he copied them, signed his name at the foot, and sent them to his divinity. They were very bad verses, but Terry was delighted with them, and, being unable to express in words all the gratitude he felt, nearly crushed my hand to pulp and smashed my shoulder blades with all the shakings and slappings that he bestowed on me.

There was only one line in the poem with which he found fault, and as luck would have it

that was a remarkably good line—out of all measure the best in the poem. Also—(you may have guessed it)—I did not write this line: it was one which I stole. I needed something to rhyme with "night"—and because it tickled my fancy to see it glowing amid my own turgid verses, and because my plagiarism, had it been known to Terry and Monica Mary, would have been reckoned by them of no account, I wrote this—

"A lovely lady garmented in light."

But Terry was doubtful of it: as applied to Monica Mary it seemed to him to imply that she did not wear clothes, and he was sure she would deem this an "ondacent" suggestion. And, tasting again the questionable line in much the same manner as a professional tea taster seeks the full and true flavour of tea, a brilliant poetic inspiration seized Terry: he begged my permission to change "light" to "white," and this being granted (the which I had no right to do), he made the necessary alteration and his happiness was complete.

Thereafter I was a pal-in-particular to Terry, and hence I was privileged to learn all the circumstantial details of the *affaire* which I set down here.

Fickle Terry!

. . . . . .

The scene was St. Omer; for all this happened during that happy time when the Glasgows were on the Lines of Communication.

You are to imagine me, then, one evening seated in a corner of the hut that was my billet, patiently struggling through a bewilderingly colloquial French novel with the aid of a cheap candle and a cheap dictionary whose luminary powers were equally feeble: when suddenly, the door at the farther end being opened, there entered Private Terence Kane in a highly exhilarated state. There was no doubt of his mental exaltation for he was informing everybody within a half-mile radius, in booming tones that impinged on the ears with the force and effect of a series of shell bursts, that when he told them how bee-yu-tiful She was, they wudn't belave him. And then launched, roaring and irrelevant, into a ditty of the trenches—

"We march up the Yellow Road night after night,
We're shniped at from left an' we're shniped at from right,
An' if somethin' don't happen an' that very soon,
There'll be nobody left in this blinkin' platoon.
Tra-la-la, tra-la-lee,
An' it's all for the sake of our King an' Countree."

"Terry, Terry," I remonstrated, "for heaven's sake shut up or the whole camp will

know you're drunk, and you'll have the Orderly Officer buzzing about the hut."

"Dhrunk!" said Terence; "'tis the way that ye're thinkin' I'm dhrunk?"—He paused a moment, then threw back his head in a bellowing laugh.—"Faith, an' mebbe ye're right. It's full I certainly am—fuller, I'll wager, than yez ever was in yeer life. I've had——" he ticked off the various items on his fingers—"I've had eleven cups av tay, three sangwidges, fourteen morsoh de cake—as ye were!—morsoh de gattoh, four packets av woodbines, an' seven tunes on the pianny—all at the Red Triangle Pub. But dhrunk! Smell me breath if ye like. I've never stepped wan fut out av the Y.M.C.A. hut this night an' I'm no liar 'at says ut."

He seated himself on his roll of bedding that was beside mine, and, "Howly Saints!" said he, "it's me kilt 'at's chokin' me in the middle."

I saw that he spoke truth, and his next words informed me that his exhilaration was the effect of something as potent to stir a man's senses as red wine—namely, the light that lies in a woman's eyes, that lies and lures.

"Have ye seen the new shop-gyurl they've been afther gettin' in the Red Triangle?" he asked.

I shook my head.

"Faith! an' she's the swatest little bit of stuff I've seen outside av Blighty. Three shillin' I've spent this night just for the privilege of astin' her for cups of tay an' gattose (*gateaux*), an' seein' the smile lickin' roun' the corners av her pretty lips as she handed me the stuff. An' she was smilin' goodo whin I come up to the counter for the umpteenth time, believe me."

"But, Terry," I expostulated, "this will never, never do. What about Monica Mary? Surely you are not going to desert her, and transfer your allegiance to this other fair charmer? Fie on you, Terence Kane!"

"Desartin' is ut? An' I'm thinkin' 'tis the way Monica Mary is desartin' me. Hasn't she wrote to me that she's just afther bein' to the pictures wid another block—an' him wid three stripes to his arrm? A lousy Sarjint, an' him not even a soldier neither—just an A.S.C. man! —To blazes wid Monica Mary, I says, an' I'll be afther gettin' you to write some more potery wan av thim days to the little shop-gyurl in the Y.M.C.A. An' now I'm gettin' down to me scratcher to drame av the saucy little darlin', so there!"

Thus sudden was it: in the time that it takes a smile to lick roun' the corners av two pretty

lips, Terry was off with the old love and on with the new.

Fickle Terry!

. . . . . .

On the following evening I visited the Y.M.C.A. hut, ostensibly to buy Yellow Perils, but really to see for myself the "new shop-girl" who had charmed away Terry's susceptible heart. My visit occurred during one of the busy hours, and ere one could win to a position of vantage at the counter a long and tedious wait had to be endured. For it was necessary to take one's place in a long queue that extended from one end of the building to the other; then, having eventually achieved the premier place in this procession and been supplied at the pay box with tickets to the amount of one's intended purchase, one became last man in another queue of even greater length and whose forward motion was still more sluggish, for it washed past the sales counter.

From my position in the queue I turned my head this way and that, craned and strained to catch a glimpse of Terry's syren. At last I saw her—filling mugs with tea from a big urn. And it was instantly borne in upon me that my Irish friend was a man of discernment and taste in the quality feminine.

Of a surety she had charm and loveliness of an uncommon kind. She had an air of distinction—the appearance of being possessed of a strong and original personality: she was different, yet it's impossible for me to convey to you in what her difference consisted.

Her hair was the colour of a new penny after its first lustre has been dimmed; and it was cut short—(it was no more than three inches long, I'll swear)—and was so deliciously fluffy that it deliberately enticed a man to—— As you were! That's nothing to the point! And a fringe of it hung, comb-like, low over her forehead—somewhat in the fashion that you may see in Japanese dolls.

Her face was a perfect oval, and there was more than a hint of firmness in the chin: and her complexion was of a rosebud delicacy.—But, bless my soul, I know that that conveys nothing, for you and I have a bowing acquaintance with a hundred damozels of whom that might be a Police Court Records description.—Still, there was something different. Perhaps it was in the nose of patrician mould, or in the frank grey eyes with the lazy drooping lids: or maybe it was in the generous, full-lipped mouth with its slow creeping smile that dimpled one soft cheek and revealed the flashing whiteness

of her even teeth. She wore a blouse of champagne colour with a V-shaped opening at the neck, and in contrast her throat was like a pillar of virgin snow. Yet her blouse had nothing to do with the "difference," for later I was to see her in an ordinary housemaid's overall or wrapper, and, if possible, she looked then even more charming and distinctive: "more arty," Gussie called it.

But there! I must relinquish this job of auctioneer's clerk that I've been imposing on myself: one can't really make an impressive inventory of feminine charms. They are much too subtle and illusive to be recorded ledger fashion. A poet may find subject for an ode in his lady's eyebrow: your auctioneer's clerk can only record the colour, texture, and number of the hairs that compose it. An unsatisfactory business at best!

. . . . . .

I was almost at the counter when I felt a tap on my shoulder, and, turning, saw Terry. He had a strip of purchase tickets in his hand.

"Och, Leo," said he, "there's no need at all, at all, for ye to be waitin' here in this line. It's a slow business an' a waste av valuable time, an' ye wantin' to be gettin' on wid yeer letter writin' an' readin'. Let me take yeer place an'

I'll do the waitin' an' will get yeer fags for ye."

Of course I saw his little game, but I yielded him my place in the queue and stood by his side. He manœuvred for position at the counter, so that he might be served by none other than The Lemonade Girl (which was the sobriquet that the boys later attached to her).

Her face lit up with a friendly smile and her lips twitched as with a secret sense of humour when she saw Terry standing before her.

"Back again?" she queried.

"Yes, ut's the forgetful cratur ye'll be thinkin' me," said Terry, with the blandness of an Imperial ambassador, "but 'tis the way I clean misremimbered whin I was gettin' the tay an' gattose that there was somethin' else I was wantin'."

"And what can I give you now?"

(There's no use in talking about it, but her smile really was charming and her voice inordinately soft and mellifluous.)

"Well, an' phwat wad ye be afther advisin' me to buy now, do ye think?"

She turned her head away in soft laughter.

"Oh, but—really, you know—how can I tell you that?"

"Well, how wad it be if I took some shmokes?"

"Cigarettes or woodbines?"

"Och, I'll be takin' a packet of woodbines for mesilf an' some yellow perils for me potery writin' pal."

"That all?"

"Well,—let me see now—yes, that'll be doin' in the meantime. Maybe 'tis the way I'll be remimberin' somethin' else later, an' I'll come back whin ye're not so busy."

"All right!" Her face betrayed her good-humoured merriment. "There's still plenty of stuff left to buy."

"An' ut's me 'tis the bhoy for the buyin' av ut. Bo' jour, maddymoselle."

I withdrew to the farther end of the hut and Terry joined me.

"Isn't ut that she's the swatest thing yez ever saw?" he asked, in an intense whisper.

"She certainly looks very nice," I said. "Something of the artist in her, I fancy."

"Artist, is ut? More likely angel, I'm thinkin'. Did ever ye see the beat of her figgur? Did ever ye see a waist that so tempted ye like? So nate an' trim ut is—an' just the span of a man's arrm. Yirra, yirra! but she's the very spit of them gyurls ye read about in books an' never see."

And much more to the same effect.

In a little while Terry betook himself again to the end of the queue and worked his way slowly up to the counter, when doubtless his conversation with the bun-distributing divinity followed much the same intimate and intellectual course as before.

. . . . . .

So it was on every succeeding night. Terry worshipped regularly at the shrine of the Red Triangle, and the other men, seeing only his lavish purchases of food and fizz, marvelled at his insatiable hunger and thirst, yet knew not that these were of the heart.

And he made progress with his wooing. Often during the quiet hours, when there was no press of purchasers, you might find Terry, leaning over the counter, engaged in cheerful, confidential talk with The Lemonade Girl; and the laughter with which it was punctuated scemed to indicate that it was highly agreeable to both.

One night he informed me jubilantly that after much coaxing she had consented to call him "Terry," and had told him that her name was Kathleen—Kathleen Arnold.

"An' a swate an' pretty name ut is," said Terry, "but none so swate as Kathleen Kane wad be. God be wi' the day!"

He told me, too, that he had invited her on more than one occasion to "promenade" with him, but she had always been unable to accept because her free time was so very limited.

"An' it's a howlin' shame how that poor gyurl's worked," he added. "All thim hungry soldiers pesterin' the life out av her for fags an' tay an' what else. Shure, they shud be afther larnin' to reshtrain their appetites. I'm in the mind to write to 'John Bull' about ut."

And once on the occasion of an entertainment given by the Lena Ashwell Concert Party the battalion was tickled by the spectacle of Terry striding up the aisle at the very moment of beginning, and seating himself in a vacant chair beside The Lemonade Girl — who, moreover, welcomed him with a smile. An usher, in syllables more terse than tolerant, informed Terry that that row was reserved for the Y.M.C.A. staff, and would have removed him— but a word from The Lemonade Girl set matters right, and Terry remained beside her throughout the concert.

The influence of this amatory episode on Terry's work as a soldier was most marked: for, as you will understand, a sentence of C.B. would have been highly disagreeable and inconvenient for him just then. Hence his every

duty was performed now with the maximum of efficiency, and he was ever the cleanest and tidiest man on parade and the most punctual. And I have heard him shout of a morning, when the signal for the "Fall in" sounded, "Come on, you fellas! Putt down them papers an' get fell in: the whussle's went"—thus usurping the duties of the Corporal.

The Company Commander noted the improvement, and complimented Terry upon it. "Keep it up, Kane," he said, "and who knows how soon promotion may be yours? You're a first-rate soldier, you know, when you try, and if you'll only keep out of trouble there's no reason why you should remain a private much longer."

"Glory be!" said Terry, in relating the incident to me, "I see mesilf a Sarjint soon—wid three stripes on the wan arrm an' *trois* on t'other. The matther of a pound a week I'll be makin', an' there wad be a big separation allowince for the missis. Yirra, yirra! 'tis the way I'll be astin' her soon to marry me."—His brow furrowed in annoyance and perplexity.—"The divvle av ut is that there's always so many sweds trapesin' round that Red Triangle, an' shure a man doesn't want to propose a solemn thing like a marriage right forninst his pals an' wid them all listenin' an' lookin' on."

But the opportunity that Terry desired came soon.

. . . . . .

A boxing tournament had been arranged, and joyous expectation and excitement filled the minds of the troops stationed at St. Omer. For, of all the forms of entertainment arranged for the benefit of Mr. Atkins, none so appeals to him and attracts him in such large numbers as this.

Now, at previous tournaments Terry had always been the bright, particular star of the Glasgows, and never yet since his arrival in France had he tasted defeat. But of late a certain Company of the A.S.C. had been boasting of the prowess of a champion of theirs, and had been clamouring for a meeting between him and Terry—welter-weights both.

"What! A fighter in the ranks of the A.S.C.! *Allez!* You're kiddin'." Thus our fellows when they heard of Terry's rival—in their tones all the fine contempt that the infantryman habitually assumes when speaking of other branches of the Service.

But here was the opportunity that all had been waiting for, and an effort was made to arrange a match between Terry and Binthorn, the A.S.C. champion, at the forthcoming tourna-

ment. To the consternation of everyone concerned Terry declined to consider the proposition.

The battalion gasped, staggered, and collapsed with its head between its nerveless hands. Terry !—Refuse a scrap !—The battalion confessed itself to be botched, blowed, and bewildered : foozled, fed-up, and far-from-home.

But Terry vouchsafed no further explanation than—" I'm off the fightin' biz—in the meantime. If yez wants to fight the A.S.C. galoot, fight um yeersilf. I'll not meet um."

The Sports Committee coaxed him — the Subalterns pled with him—his Company Commander spake soft sawder unto him—his pals argued with him and finally abused him—all in an effort to get him to reconsider his decision. Terry did not budge. Nor did he relent when he saw the other boxing men being relieved from all duties and parades, and in happy freedom devoting themselves to a course of special training for the forthcoming event.

One night I talked to Terry about it.

" You know, Terry," I said, " when you go to the tournament you'll just be thirsting for a scrap yourself, and when you see that A.S.C. bloke putting his opponent down for the count you'll be mighty sorry you didn't stand up to him."

"An' that's just phwat I won't be," Terry snapped, "for 'tis the way 'at I won't be at the toornymint, see?" Then he leaned forward and became confidential. "'Tis not that I'm afraid of the blighter: I've stud up to better nor him in me day an' come out on top. But—'tis becase av Kathleen that I'm afther refusin' to fight."

"Has she made you promise to give up the game, then?"

"Sorra a bit av ut! But—well, yez see—I towld ye I couldn't get the chanst to putt the question to her, an'—now I'm makin' the chanst. On the night av the toornymint every swed in the place will be to see the fightin', an' the Red Triangle will be as desolut an' desarted as No Man's Land in the grey av the mornin'. That's my chanst, an' I'm afther takin' it. When all youse fellas is watchin' wan man bangin' the guts out av another, I'll be standin' agin the counter tellin' Kathleen the tale, an' hearin' her say 'Yus.' Och, yirra, yirra, 'tis the great game entoirely!"

. . . . . .

When the eventful night arrived I went with others of the boys to the great building, formerly a riding school, in which the contests were to take place. During the first hour the

boxing was not of an exciting nature, and several times I found myself wondering what success Terry was meeting with in his wooing—or if at the crucial moment he had funked his proposal.

The third contest had just ended when there was a sudden commotion and a hubbub of voices at the rear of the hall. Men turned in their seats to see what was the matter. Somebody was forcing his way through the huddle of spectators who stood in the side passage. "It's Terry Kane," I heard men say. And there were shouts of "Come on, Terry, get into the ring!"—"Good old Terry-lad!"—and the like.

It *was* Terry. He emerged suddenly from the press of spectators, and ran up the passage leading to the ring-side. A little group of officials gathered around him, and Terry was seen to be talking to them with wild and excited gestures. The party retired to the contestants' dressing-room, Terry still in frenzied gesticulation. And a few minutes later an officer mounted to the ring and announced that the man who was to have met Binthorn of the A.S.C. had withdrawn, and that in his place Private Terence Kane of the Glasgow Highlanders would meet Binthorn in a 15 round contest.

A deafening uproar followed—cheers and more shouts of "Good old Terry"—"Stick it,

Terry-lad "—"Carry on, the Glasgows!"—that gradually subsided to a buzz of excited conversation. Opinions, emphatic and lurid in their expression, were loudly proclaimed, and bets were freely exchanged—the odds on the whole being against Terry, for many even of his most ardent supporters were violent in their denunciations of his folly in entering the ring without any preliminary training.

I thought of all the bottled fizz and the buns and the woodbines he had consumed during the past few weeks, and I too feared for his chances. And all the time I kept wondering what had happened. Had The Lemonade Girl "turned him down?"—or had he funked the proposal?—or had the lure of The Game proved stronger than the lure of The Sex?

I was still puzzling when a burst of cheering told me that the fun was about to begin, and looking up I saw Terry and Binthorn, with their seconds, scrambling through the ropes into the ring. The usual preliminaries were gone through, and when eventually the two men squared up to each other a hush descended on the onlookers, who sat eager-eyed, tremblingly and delightedly expectant.

At the end of the sixth round Terry's supporters were at the nadir of sick disappoint-

ment and despair. Terry was already a beaten man, and they knew it. He was in no condition for fighting; and at the very start seemed to have lost his head: he hit wildly and with terrific energy, indulged in aimless rushing tactics, and had no thought to protect himself. Now he was badly winded, and showed signs of the severe punishment he had received—and Binthorn had taken his full measure and was craftily playing with him.

In the seventh round Terry, acting on the advice of his second, remained on the defensive: his left eye was closed, and his right cheek glistened where a considerable patch of skin had been scraped off: his breathing was heavy and laboured — he exhibited symptoms of "grogginess." The spectators—those of them who were not too fed-up to say anything—opined that it was all over but the shouting. It had been a disappointing contest.

And then a strange thing happened. Terry was at bay in the centre of the ring, his opponent circling warily around him, feinting now and again, twice getting in light taps on the body. Suddenly the A.S.C. man stepped in with a straight drive from the right: Terry side-stepped —his left hand jabbed viciously upward, the weight of his whole trunk behind it: the blow

caught the other on the point of the chin, and almost simultaneously Terry's right swung round and landed on the jaw. For perhaps two seconds Binthorn swayed dizzily—his hands dropped to his side—then he pitched forward and lay still.

"One—two—three—" the referee counted the seconds aloud, but his voice was lost amid the hubbub of excited ejaculations that arose from the crowd.—Then a sudden breathless silence broken only by the slow dropping words, "Eight —nine—ten."—And then confusion and clamour indescribable.

. . . . . .

It was not until long after "Lights Out" that I got a chance to have a confidential word with Terry. On his return to the hut he was the centre of a noisy, admiring crowd, and every incident of the fight was rehearsed a hundred times with adjectival art, sexual and sanguinary. The criticism, comment, and ejaculatory appreciation continued even after the hut was in darkness and the speakers rolled in their blankets, but at last there was silence.

Then—"Are ye awake, Leo?"—I heard a whisper come from the adjoining bed.

"Yes. How do you feel now, Terry?"

"Och, not so bad. But's the bee-yu-tiful face I'll be afther havin' to-morra—like a night-

mare rainbow. I've got half the carcase of a bullock on my eye now."

"Whatever made you fight to-night?"

A pause, then—"Shure, 'tis the way I got a knock-out blow mesilf to-night, an' I had to be givin' ut to another. . . . I feel the betther av ut. I've got the madness out av me system. An' it wuz a lovely scrap."

"Tell me what happened."

"Ye'll not be for belavin' me if I tell yez. 'Tis the strangest story 'at ever I larned."

"Of course I'll believe you. Carry on!"

"Well, I wint to the Red Triangle, an' as I was afther prophecyin' it was almost desarted, an' I had Kathleen all alone to mesilf. We stood talkin' acrost the counter for a while, talkin' about everythin' except the wan thing. Always whin I thried to spake the wurrds they changed in me throat to somethin' else. But at last I got started, an' thin there wuz no stoppin' av me. The wurrds rowled out like the Liffey in flood, for I towld her all that wuz in me heart to say. At first she smiled as though she found it amusin', an' thin she grew as sarious-like as though she'd just larned av the death av a frind, an' her face wint as white as a Summer cloud. Thin the colour come creepin' into her cheeks again like the red into the sky av an evenin'

an' all the time her eyes wuz lowered modest-like.

"Whin I had finished she sez all trimblin' an' slow-like,—'I'm sorry,'—she sez, an' thin stopped.

"'Shure, there's nothin' to be sorry about,' sez I, 'whin a man tells ye he loves ye.'

"'Tis not that,' sez she. 'But—but—oh, I can't explain it,' she sez, 'but 'tis the way I can't be marryin' ye.'

"'An' why not ?' sez I. 'Is ut that I haven't enough money ?'

"An' at that she breaks in sudden-like, 'Oh, 'tis not that at all, at all.'

"'Becase if ut is,' sez I, 'it's me 'at'll be drawin' a pound a week soon, an' ut's the fine big allowince ye'd be havin' as a Sarjint's wife. An' think av the glory av ut,' I sez. 'A Sarjint's wife ! Faith, that's the next best to havin' the three stripes on yeer arrm yeersilf. An' ye wudn't need to wurrk behind a counther no more.'

"'I know 'tis a very great honour,' she sez. An' thin suddintly she putts one av her little hands on mine as it lays on the counther, an' I looks an' sees 'at she's all trimblin' an' agitated-like. An', glory be to God, her eyes wuz shinin' wid somethin' that wuz first cousin to tears.

'Oh, Terry,' she sez, 'I had no idea that you felt like that. Indade, I didn't. I thought you just wanted me as a frind,' she sez.

"'Shure, an' I do,' sez I. 'Tis the quare man 'at wud be wantin' to have his wife for his inimy.'

"'Oh, but don't yez understand,' sez she, 'I can't be yeer wife.' An' thin her voice became as soft an' tender an' plaintive as a bird's song in the evenin'. 'Terry,' she sez, 'Terry, I like ye treminjous. I like ye betther nor annywan I've met since I come to France, an' 'tis the way I look on yez as wan av the dearest frinds I have in the wurrld. Ye do belave that, don't ye?' she sez.

"'Shure, an' if ye say ut, thin ut is so,' sez I, 'an' I shud like to meet the man 'at says he don't belave yez.'

"'Well, ye are my frind, Terry,' sez she, 'an' I want ye to kape on bein' ut. But don't ye see——' and she hesitated, an' I saw she didn't like to say ut—'don't ye see—'tis not the way I'm in love wid ye, an' so I couldn't be for marryin' av ye?'

"'Yirra, yirra!' I sez, 'is that all ut is 'at's throublin' ye? Shure, ye can kape an aisy mind on that same score, for ut's me 'at has enough love to be doin' the two av us. An' whin we're

married I'll be afther givin' ye some av my love, an' thin ye'll have some, yet my store will be no less—which is a quare thing, but ut's thrue.'

"An' thin before she cud say wan wurrd more, five or six fellas come thrampin' into the buildin', an' she turrns her head away an' blows her nose an' dabs her eyes wid her hanky. An' whin they'd got their tickuts she goes to the other ind av the counther to sarve thim. An' just a moment afther the postman comes in an' dumps some letthers on the counther besoide me. Me eyes fell on the top wan av thim, an' I saw—for ut wuz in a big, bowld handwrite—that ut wuz addrist to 'Lady Kathleen Arnold.'

"Now, that seemed to me to be a funny way av addressin' an envellup. Sometimes whin I wuz writin' to Monica Mary I wud address the envellup to Miss Monica Mary Boyle, but oftener than not I'd lave out the Miss as onnecessary. But I'd never thought av writin' Lady Monica Mary, though shure I knew she wuz a lady an' not a gintleman. An' thin it suddenly struck me 'at 'Lady' was parrt av Kathleen's name —'at ut must be hers by right an' wasn't just stuck in, the same as you stick in 'Mister' whin ye're in a good mood an' writin' to a pal. An' I knew it wuz only the gintry 'at had 'Lady' stuck afore their names.

"So whin Kathleen—I mane whin She come back, I sez to her very solemn-like, I sez, 'Is that letther mint for ye?'

"She looked, an'—'Shure,' sez she, 'ut is.'

"'Thin ye belong to the gintry,' I sez, 'for who ever heerd av a shop-gyurl which wrote "Lady" afore her name?'

"She seemed took aback for a moment an' as though she didn't know phwat to say. Thin sez she, 'Me father's the Earl av Mintshire,' sez she, 'an' I'm the Lady Kathleen Arnold. But there's nothing in that. Ut makes no differ to our frindship.'

"'An' why have ye not towld me this afore?' I axes.

"She laughed narvous-like, an sez she, 'Well, it seemed so trivvle,' she sez, 'that ut wasn't worth the tellin'. An' besides,' she sez, 'I'm Miss Arnold here. That letther is from a frind who has forgot my inshtructions.'

"I wuz angry wid mesilf by this time for makin' a fool av me by fallin' in love wid wan av the gintry, an' becase I wuz angry wid mesilf I wuz angry wid her too an' every wan else beside. So I sez to her sharp-like, 'An' phwat right have yez,' I sez, 'to be maskyradin' here as a shop-gyurl whin ye're no shop-gyurl at all, at all? Kapin' some pore, desarvin' cratur out

av a job:—ye've a divvle av a cheek,' I sez, 'an' I'd say ut to yez even if ye wuz the daughter av the Earl av Hell hisself.'

"'An' ut's a divvle av a mishtake ye're makin',' she sez. . . . Well, annyway, if that isn't phwat she said it's phwat she mint. . . . 'Tis the way I'm not doin' it for money at all, at all,' she sez: 'it's worth more nor money just to have the pruvilege av doin' some little thing for all youse boys phwat's doin' so much for us.'

"I thought over that a while, her not spakin' more, an' it seemed to me 'twas the strangest thing I'd ever heerd. But I saw she wuz spakin' the truth as far as she knew ut, an' man or woman can do no more nor that.

"'An' if that's the way ut is,' I sez, 'I'll be afther astin' yeer pardon for makin' a bluddy fool av mesilf an' for the cheek I gave yez a minute back. Ye can forgit all I've said to ye to-night, but remimber that ut wuz all thrue.'

"Thin I made to lave, but she called me back an' shuk me hand, an' towld me very narvous an' trimblin'-like 'at she wuz very proud av the honour I had done her, an' that she wud always reckon my decliration av love wan av the greatest honours in her life.

"I left the buildin' in a ragin', tearin' madness wid mesilf, knowin' mesilf for the biggest

fool in the Arrmy. To put mesilf up among the gintry! To be thinkin' 'at the daughter av a Earl wuz a shop-gyurl! To be astin' a aristocrasy to be my wife! Yirra, yirra, but it bates me!

"I wanted to kick mesilf, to punch the foolishness out av mesilf, to sit on me head for a quarther av an hour or two: but not bein' a contortionist I couldn't do none av thim things to me satisfaction. An' thin I bethought me av Binthorn, an' I knew he wuz the wan man app'inted by Providence to give me the lickin' I desarved. So I ran to the boxin'-ring as hard as though I wuz bein' shniped at wid minnies (*minenwerfers*), the officials fixed up the match all right, an' the rist ye saw for yeersilf.

"I didn't count on batin' Binthorn. I knew I wuz in no condition for a fight, but I wanted a good hammerin', an' faith! I got that same. An' I wanted to work off some av the bad timper 'at wuz fizzin' in me veins like ut wuz the ginger pops I've been dhrinkin' thim last three or four weeks. I didn't desarve to win: on p'ints I wuz licked proper: an' I wuz lucky in gettin me left in as I did. . . . But ut wuz a pretty punch, wuzn't it? A cleaner knock-out than Kathleen—I mane Her Leddy—

give me. Shure, I'm falin' as happy now as a pig among muck."

. . . . . .

About a fortnight later a large flat parcel was delivered to Terry, and on being opened it was found to contain a photograph—by Madame Lallie Charles—of an exquisite lady in a shimmering satin gown. On it was inscribed—"To Terry, best of pals,—from Kathleen."

Enclosed was a note to the effect that the writer was returning to England almost immediately, and hoped that Terry would keep in touch with her: and an invitation was extended to Terry to visit Mint Castle whenever opportunity occurred, where he would be received as an honoured guest. On the same day Terry received from England a sumptuous parcel, richer and more varied in its contents than any man in the platoon had ever received, and in it was a card inscribed thus—"To my daughter's friend, with warmest thanks for his kindness and courtesy to her.—Mintshire."

"Glory be!" said Terry, "is ut me 'at's mixin' wid the gintry, or is ut dramin' I am? 'Mintshire,' he signs hisself, just as though I wuz an old pal av his: it's like him shlappin' me on the back an' callin' me 'Kane, owld chap!'"

Then his eyes wandered again to the photograph and its vision of feminine daintiness and sartorial splendour.

" 'Tis the way I'll be kapin' this," he said, " an' if Monica Mary does be ever castin' her Sarjint in me face afther her an' me is married, I'll be tellin' her about the Earl's daughter what was a flame of mine, an' showin' her this here. Yirra, yirra! that should be puttin' the proper awe av her husbint in her. An' mebbe 'tis the way 'at Monica Mary an' me an' the childher will be callin' at Mint Castle an' havin' a dish av tay an' a palaver wid owld Mintshire an' Kathleen — I mane Her Leddy. Uh-huh! Pootater (*Peut-être*) "

I took that to mean that Terry had restored Monica Mary to her former place in his affections. Which was as it should have been.

THE BIG PUSH.

I.

EN ROUTE.

JULY 7-14, 1916.

At the Front rumours fly around as thickly as shells, and ninety-nine out of every hundred prove to be "duds." Heaven knows where they all originate—though the cooks and officers' servants and signallers usually have a fair idea too.

And, of course, when, having just retired into rest billets after a long and particularly trying spell in the trenches, the order came to "stand-by and be ready to move at an hour's notice," with instructions to the Transport Section to prepare for entrainment, the usual rumours—all from highly authoritative sources—took their excited course.

We were going to Salonika, also to Mesopotamia, also to India; we were going back to the Lines of Communication: Verdun had fallen,

and we were being hurried to the assistance of the French there: and we were being sent as "chief pushers" in the Big Push in Picardy.

When, one sultry July afternoon, the battalion set off from Bethune in column of route, we could still only take our individual choice of the prevailing rumours with regard to our ultimate destination.

We marched until a late hour that evening, and were billeted for the night in the out-buildings of various widely scattered farmhouses; and about midnight of the following day, after a further march, we entrained at the town of Lillers.

There was no chance of obtaining any sleep during the railway journey, for we travelled in covered horse trucks — forty men with full equipment in each: and this was only made possible by the greater number remaining up-standing. We tried to forget our discomfort in song. With the coming of dawn we were able to note the names of the railway stations we passed and, after consulting newspaper maps, we realised that we were going to the Somme. Then was the talk faster and more excited: a spirit of elation and eagerness, a shining zest, were apparent in all: the spirit of The Big Push.

It was early morning when we disentrained and, lining the side of a quiet country road, partook of a somewhat light and sketchy breakfast. And—although we did not then know it—we were to march for a long and painfully tiring day without again tasting food.

. . . . . .

Never had the Glasgows presented a braver, finer spectacle than they did on that sunny morning of July. Nearly twelve hundred men of Scotland's best—in the prime of physical condition — at the highest point of military efficiency—in their bearing the confidence of men tested and not found wanting, the just pride of honours lately won . . . cheerily and jauntily they marched to the urging skirl of the pipes. There were none but blithe hearts in all that long procession.

The district was new to us and, being whole and untouched by War's devastating fingers, it looked infinitely good to our war-weary eyes. We were refreshed and gladdened by the vision we beheld.

For it was a fair and pleasant land, this that we journeyed through—a land that laughed under the caresses of the sun—a land of green and gold, of billowing uplands and sweetly odorous valleys, of little singing rivers. The

fields were yellow with ripe corn, splashed here and there with the barbaric crimson splendour of clustered poppies and the ethereal blue of cornflowers. The charm of the trees was over the landscape: here, a dark copse: there, a few isolated trees growing beside a white-walled, red-roofed farm, or studding a green pasture: yonder a row of poplars marching statelily against the horizon.

The reception accorded to us in the villages through which we passed was akin to that given to the original Expeditionary Force during its first weeks in France. For few British troops had preceded us on that route, and many of the people had never before seen kilted soldiers.

Women, old men, and children, they ran to meet us when the shrilling of the pipes had heralded our approach, and, walking and running by our sides, accompanied us to the farther end of the village, and sometimes far beyond. Their talk was voluble and excited, their handshaking continuous and fervent. We were so big, they told us, so very big—bigger than the English soldiers, bigger than the French, bigger—oh yes! —much bigger than the Allemands . . . who were being soundly beaten now: yesterday three thousand of the dogs were taken prisoners: and the war would be over in a month. The

Ecossais so very big would not need to fight much more.

Sometimes the villagers brought us bottles of wine and beer, and these we drained to the last drop without ever slackening our pace.

In the end the villagers stood to watch us march by—the women waving handkerchiefs in farewell, the men politely bowing and doffing their hats, the children in their final frenzy of handshaking buffeted by the moving ranks: all reiterating their friendly cries of "*Au revoir: bonne chance, Ecossais!*" So we saw them standing in the roadway until the cloud of dust that travelled in our wake blotted them out.

Kilometre after kilometre we marched—through the hottest hours of the middle day—and our feet and backs ached under the weight of all we carried, our faces were dabbled and streaked with dust and perspiration, our clothes and equipment were grey as the roadway itself, and in our mouths was only dust to chew.

Heavens! how hot the sun was! and how weary we became!

Then in the afternoon we came to the city of Amiens, and the pipers blew as though their lungs were yet filled with the caller air of the Scottish hills, and brave and defiant was the boom of the big drum, and roguish and enticing

the roll of its little brothers. Oh, the magic there is, the allurement, in the sound of the little drums! Up went every head, braced was every back, and jaunty was the step with which we swung through the city streets. And we had smiles and badinage a-plenty to exchange with the onlookers—especially if they were feminine, and fair of form and feature. Our tiredness was forgotten, and the admiring spectators never suspected the presence of it.

Afternoon wore on to evening, and there were no longer any villagers or city folks before whom we could assume an air of bravado and gaiety. We were painfully weary, and each step was an effort of the will. Other troops immediately preceded us on this road, and we passed their stragglers, in ones and twos and threes, limping along with awkward, cheerless gait. And by the roadside lay others in the extremest stages of exhaustion—lying just as they had fallen, with all the semblance of men dead.

"Boots—boots—boots—boots—movin' up and down again,
And there's no discharge in the war."

Walking had become a purely mechanical exercise—our limbs controlled, as it seemed, by

some power outwith us. Our brains were numb and dazed with fatigue and the maddening, persistent pain that was our every step. Blindly, dumbly, helplessly, we staggered on. No man spoke a word to his neighbour, or looked to left or right, or even smoked. Save for the broken shuffle of our feet on the grey road we moved in utter silence.

The sleepless journey of the previous night and the long abstinence from food were having their effect.

Our halts became more frequent and of longer duration—until we marched only for fifteen minutes and then rested as many. The Commanding Officer walked up and down the ranks —he had long since dismounted from his charger, and was trudging along on foot even as were his men—scanning intently the faces and bearing of all, that he might know to sound a halt ere endurance had reached its limit. We lay with limbs relaxed and eyes closed in a stupor of exhaustion—not even troubling to shake off our knapsacks or unbuckle equipment—until the whistle sounded the "Fall in."

On again!—with drooping heads and lustreless eyes and bent backs—"crawling on our knees and elbows," as we ourselves expressed it later.

"God! I'm done!" said one man—took two or three staggering steps to the side of the road, and collapsed: and lay as still as stone. His companions neither spoke nor ventured a backward glance—lest the effort should exhaust all their remaining energy too.

Yet only a bare half-dozen fell out ere we reached our destination for the night: the rest stuck it gamely to the end.

And it *was* a game finish!

Our last halt was on the outskirts of a village —which we mainly discerned as a faint and multitudinous glimmering of lights through the gathering darkness. The Commanding Officer passed along the information that this village was to be our halting-place for the night. In infinite weariness we dragged ourselves to the beginning of the street, and then——

Then the pipes suddenly set the heavens and the earth dancing to the strains of "Highland Laddie"—the regimental march of the Glasgows. And almost at once the street became filled with British soldiers, who shouted greetings and questions to us in a manner more demonstrative and good-natured than Tommies are wont to assume to newcomers in France, where a habitual indifference—or seeming indifference—settles on all. But we were to learn that this new joviality,

this light-hearted spirit of hail-fellow-well-met, was the manner of the Somme in those great days of July.

And at the skirl of the pipes, and before the eyes of those critical spectators, every man braced himself, his step assumed as much of jauntiness as he could put into it, and he had a laugh and a jesting answer ready on his lips for every outsider who spoke to him.

The query that dogs the Glasgows wherever they go (because of the uniform they wear), "Hi, are you the Black Watch?" was met by the cheerfully defiant rejoinder, "Not on your life! We're the Glasgow Highlanders—9th H.L.I."

It was as though the men had been revived and strengthened by a draught of potent wine — so remarkable was the change in their demeanour. But it was something more heartening than wine that put the boldness into their step—it was the sense of the tradition and honour of their regiment: the feeling that on no account must they present other than a brave, proud front to the world—that the one unpardonable offence would be to "let the battalion down."

Oh, it was well done! It was fine! It made one's heart beat fast and the eyes grow moist in a sudden access of overwhelming pride. For,

as in a flash, was revealed something of that elusive, splendid thing that is the Spirit of the British Army.

In sheds and lofts and outhouses of divers kinds, and in the lee of walls — a sky all wonderful with stars as sole overhead covering —the battalion took its rest that night: and if our couches were hard and our sleeping chambers cold and draughty, we were hardly aware of it.

. . . . . .

Followed a day of rest, and two further days of marching. And now we were into the battle zone again—into a land deflowered by War.

On every hand were signs of The Curse. Roads cut up and rendered impassable for all ordinary traffic: derelict farms: fertile fields churned into a wilderness of mud by the multitudinous feet of armies: villages half-depopulated —sudden, unplanned gaps in the rows of houses —craters in the village street, littered with a debris of crumbled stones and mortar that had but lately been houses—shattered roofs and walls, and gaping window sockets. And everywhere in possession, that hydra-headed, care-defying blade, Private Thomas Atkins.

For two nights we bivouaced in a field only a few kilometres distant from the fighting line. Our knapsacks—containing greatcoats and all

our belongings save "cleaning kit," *i.e.*, towel, soap, razor, etc.—had been left in one of the villages through which we had passed, and now our sole protection from rain and cold was the waterproof ground-sheet that each man carried. By fastening two or three of these together, and with the aid of some boughs to serve as supports, little tents were fashioned—just big enough to hold two or three men in a lying posture and huddled closely together for warmth. Line after line of these low tents (or "bivvies," as the men call them) sprang into being, until the field presented somewhat of the appearance of a settled camp.

Although so near to the scene of hostilities we were really fairly safe, for between our place of encampment and the German lines rose several sharply defined ridges which effectually prevented enemy observation—especially as, by reason of the vigilance and alertness and daring of our own aircraft, the enemy was unable to use his æroplanes or balloons for that purpose. He was a very short-sighted enemy indeed.

The last evening being cold, innumerable small fires of brushwood and twigs were lit all over the field, and around these the men sprawled in attitudes of ease. And while some sang and were merry, others gave themselves to talk of

the yesterdays and to-morrows, or were silent in presence of the surge of memoried or hoped-for things that they saw limned in the red heart of the fire.

The spectacle of that gloomy field with its twinkling fires—the figures of the men moving about in dark silhouette against the soft and varied radiances—lives in the memory. For many—so sadly many—of those good fellows were destined not to outlive the morrow.

THE BIG PUSH.

II.

AT FRICOURT AND MAMETZ.

JULY 14TH, 1916.

"Show a leg there, boys! It's after 6.30, and breakfast is up."

The voice of the Orderly Officer was cheerful if his raps on the walls of our little tents were peremptory and commanding.

In the manner of worms we slid and wriggled out of our "bivvies" and, having scrambled to our feet, stood blinking in the bright morning sunshine.

A little later the battalion, in column of route, was moving towards the firing-line.

The roar of the guns, from being dull and distance-muffled, became sharp and distinct. A squat, fat, green-painted monster, standing in the middle of a farmyard, barked as we passed by.

"We're gettin' into it now!" said Corporal Popple, in tones of immense satisfaction, then sang with gusto—

> "Come on along with me an' have a jubilee,
> In ma old Picardy home."

An excited ejaculation passed rapidly along the ranks—"German prisoners!"

The rear of the long column swung inwards with a serpent-like motion: men were side-stepping and craning their necks to see ahead on the white, dusty roadway.

The prisoners trailed past us—perhaps three hundred of them, dust-grimed, dejected, and surly of aspect, and escorted by a score or so of Tommies whose smiles out-beamed the sun. A little farther on we passed another band of prisoners, then, beside a tent that served as a Casualty Clearing Station, we saw a crowd of Germans, bandaged of head or limb, awaiting their turn for medical treatment. Our fellows hailed all these parties with good-humoured chaff and badinage, but few acknowledged the greetings by so much as a smile. They preserved a stubborn silence and feigned a total lack of interest in us.

The effect of these successive encounters on the spirits of our men was remarkable. The

very air seemed stimulant with a sense of victory. A strange exultation possessed everyone, an irrepressible and irresponsible gaiety and light-heartedness, an eagerness to be up and doing in the thick of the fight—an eagerness, be it said, uncommon enough with long-tried and war-weary "sweds."

We strode forward with a step as buoyant and chatter as merry as though we had been going home on leave.

And now the land immediately ahead and on either side was ripped and scarred by a series of white chalky lines that zig-zagged and criss-crossed like the lines of a puzzle. We were into the world of trenches again, yet lo! we walked upon the surface of the earth without fear. The wonder of it acted like wine in our veins.

"By hokey! it's been some Push right enough," said one: and there was something of awe in his tones.

"Look over there! That's the front line now," said another—and pointed towards the farther distance, where in the upper air tiny shrapnel clouds were seen to form like toy balloons and, expanding and drifting, grow fainter and fainter until they faded into nothingness. And the sudden spurts of debris that shot up high and dark, like infernal fountains, against

the horizon, we knew for the bursting of heavy shells.

We came upon a squad of French soldiers at work on the road, repairing the damage done to it by shells. Others were filling up an old communication trench that ran by the roadside and might constitute a danger to traffic if allowed to remain open.

"Gosh! Look at these Frenchies filling up the trenches—preparing for peace already!" said Jimmy M——. "They seem to be quite sure that old Fritz isn't coming back.—Cheeroh, chaps! I can see us all swankin' along the *Unter den Linden* before the month's out."

And he fell to singing cheerfully—

> "Apray la guerre feenee . . .
> Anglay soldatt departee Angleterre."

. . . . . .

When we had reached the crumbled white ditch that had formerly been the British first line of defence we moved off the roadway and, having halted, piled arms and "fell out."

All day long, under the blue tent of the Summer sky, we lay on a barren strip of ground, rumpled and uneven, hashed and torn by the shells that had deluged it—the debris of which, jagged splinters of steel and iron and empty

shell cases, still littered it. Such grass as still remained in isolated patches was yellow in death: even the rich blood that had freely flowed there had failed to revive it.

For, until a fortnight before, this had been No Man's Land—the narrow barrier interposed between the warring nations. For nearly two years a curse had lain upon this land: nor man nor beast walked there by day or night. The peril of death was upon it.—Yet now we idled away the long hours in peace and security on that once unhallowed spot: we ate our dinner with the relish of hungry men: we made merry, impelled by our sense of victory: individually we mused and marvelled over the story of this place. We were thrilled by the wonder of the thing.

Before us and on either side, crowning ridges and traversing the hollows, stretched the interminable white streaks that showed where the former enemy fortifications had been—fortifications deemed by their holders to be impregnable, but now blown and battered out of all semblance to even the crudest trench.

At regular intervals in the upper air, and extending in a curving line along the whole front were British observation balloons. From our point of vantage we could count sixteen of them.

And sailing to and fro along and above the battle front, crossing and recrossing the enemy lines, undeterred by the shrapnel puffs that in rapid succession appeared as from nowhere all about them, were swarms of British æroplanes. But of aircraft of any sort had the Germans none to be seen.

On every side guns were bellowing their passionless rage, with the ceaseless effect of the rolling of drums. Within a few score yards of us two batteries of heavy artillery belched forth flames of baleful green, poisoned with sickening fumes the air we breathed, and deafened us with their shattering roar.

Yet was their noise as music in our ears—the prelude to the mighty song of victory. All that we saw filled us with wonder and delight, for it was so much more than we had expected to see. We had heard and read that the Germans had been driven out of their lines of defence, but we had not fully realised the bigness of this thing until we saw the evidences of it with our own eyes. Many times we had heard the story of that first wonderful advance on July 1st, but now, being on the very spot where it had happened, and so soon afterwards that the very ground might yet have borne the foot-prints of those who had taken part in it, we

visualised the entire scene, reconstructed imaginatively the events of that morning.

So ! — It was here that our fellows had suddenly leaped from their trenches and, in a long, thin line, had moved forward across this barren strip of land. Quietly, steadily, almost leisurely : at an even walking pace. The air was vibrant with the hiss of bullets and the scream and burst of shells. Shrapnel rained down upon them : and all around little jets of loose earth were kicking upwards from the ground. Still they moved forward as coolly and calmly as if on pleasure bent. In some places four or five men walked close together, and again in the middle of a wide gap one man jogged on alone—stumbling now into an unnoticed shell hole, then trotting for a few paces to maintain his place in the line. There a man paused a moment to relight his cigarette which had gone out. The line grew thin : a man dropped here —another there—then three or four together : but the others went on. There were gaps of ten—twenty—thirty yards : still the line did not waver. Steadily forward :—and a second line was now advancing behind the first—and a third behind that. And then, when the German trenches were only a stone's throw away, the first rank broke into a

sudden, fierce rush, and a hoarse shout drifted thinly down the wind. . .

The historic stroll across No Man's Land was over, and Kitchener's men were at death grips with the enemy. . . .

The imaginative vision of that thing—so mighty in its consequences—on the very scene of its happening, the profound significance of all that we saw and heard around, filled us with a wild exhilaration, a sort of fighting ecstasy. Like wine to us was this reassuring evidence of victory, and there was an irresistible urge in the blood that pounded through our veins.

. . . . . .

On the summit of a ridge, some two or three hundred yards distant, was a system of trenches that had suffered less from the bombardment of our guns than others in the vicinity. A few of us made a tour of exploration there.

It was a strange sensation one had in walking about these desolate trenches, so dilapidated and containing so many relics of the men who had been their tenants for so long a time. A sensation as of walking the streets of a city of the dead.

At the crossways German signboards still stood to direct the wayfarer, and above the entrances to the dug-outs were other boards of

designation. On the door-jambs and other woodwork were pencilled drawings and inscriptions —just such expressions of whimsy as we had often recorded in an idle moment in our own trenches. A muddied German greatcoat lay on the firing-step, with a half-dozen broken and crumpled cigarettes in a pocket: stuffed between two sandbags in the parapet was a Bavarian newspaper, a small local print, dated June 24th: in a niche in the parados was a soot-blackened mess-tin supported on two bricks above a handful of grey ashes: and there was a profusion of scraps of equipment and clothing and empty beer bottles.

In trench warfare one comes to regard one's foes as impersonal—forgets that they are men very much like ourselves, having pretty much the same sensations and feelings, living amid conditions similar to our own, suffering the same discomforts and hardships, alternately cheered and disheartened by the same sort of happenings. One has the feeling of being opposed to a colossal machine rather than men of flesh and blood—which is not surprising when one considers that sometimes for months on end one may be in and out the trenches with monotonous regularity and yet never see a German. But walking thus through their old trenches one was brought

into a closer human sympathy with the Germans than ever before :—by that I mean that one realised them as men like ourselves, living or having lived in the trenches a life like unto that we knew.

From the trench, long, steep flights of steps, broad as the staircase in a country mansion, dropped down to the level of the dug-outs. Gingerly we crept down some of these, for the air was inexpressibly musty, and became worse as one descended.

Strange and awful were the scenes that the shifting light of an electric torch revealed to us in these underground shelters, for, through lack of opportunity on the part of our men, many had not been cleared, and so remained as they had been on the day when the Germans were thrust out of their trenches.

The dead still lay sprawling or huddled on the floor as they had fallen. In one dark dungeon were four or five corpses in a jumbled, untidy heap : in a corner a still form was outstretched upon an iron bedstead, one arm dangling over the edge : and at a table sat a man, bending far forward, his head drooped, his arms outstretched in front of him. When the electric beam first shot out there was a sudden scurrying and squeaking of rats. . . .

The stench might have rotted the earthen walls that hid these horrors from the day. . . .

In the golden sunlight again we gulped down deep draughts of fresh air.

Said one as we walked back towards the battalion, "In Germany to-day there are wives and mothers filled with anxiety because their men have been posted as 'Missing,' and they'll go on hoping and hoping for reassuring news. . . . And—these are the 'Missing!'"

War!

. . . . . .

In the early evening the battalion was again formed up, and the order was given to march.

Our way led through the complex maze of the former German trenches, and we took in every detail with absorbed and wondering eyes. For us the place seemed peopled with the ghosts of our foes: so vividly could we picture them in their life behind the lines. There was a piquancy, droll and delightful, in the sensation of being where they had so little expected us ever to be.

As we went further, evidences of the ferocity of the struggle became more remarkable. In the newspapers we had read a few days previously that "the village of Fricourt is now in our hands." When we came to Fricourt we

remembered and laughed over the naïveté of the phrase, for Fricourt was but a name and a rubbish dump — an extensive litter of smashed bricks and crumbled mortar: not one stone had been left standing on another.

All the surrounding country was pitted as with a gigantic species of smallpox: or like a sea that has been churned into a mass of seething whirlpools and then suddenly petrified. Of grass or other living growth there was none: the shattered earth stretched bare and bleached under the august eye of the sun: there seemed no inch of it that had been left untouched by the devastating artillery fire. Such trees as still stood were white and gleaming skeletons—clean stripped of leaf and twig and bark. In one place a few dozens of these gaunt spectres of trees were thinly clustered together, the pitiable monument of a dead and vanished wood.

At the ruins of Mametz village motor ambulances were gathered in great numbers, and in front of improvised dressing stations were groups of wounded men. Now that they were out of danger and setting out on the primrose path that leads to Blighty a marked cheerfulness was in their demeanour, and they shouted to us that it had been another great day: the cavalry had been in action, we had cleared the Germans

from High Wood, and we had taken many hundreds of prisoners.

Thereafter we passed numerous batches of these prisoners being herded down from the line by small parties of British soldiers, and there was a constant stream of our own wounded, some painfully walking alone or assisted by a comrade, others on stretchers whose bearers were often Germans under the armed surveillance of a Tommy.

The road ran at the foot of a long ridge which rose immediately on our right, and to the left was a level space stretching across to the dark bulk, white-scarred, of Mametz Wood. Over this space guns were scattered in prodigal profusion — battery upon battery standing unscreened in the open, in the positions they had but newly taken up. And all vomiting forth flame and noise without cessation.

The air shivered with the tumult of cannon. From the other side of the ridge came the muffled drum-roll of several batteries of French ·75's. Overhead great shells shrieked on their passage from the guns in the rear. The darkness of the wood was split by sudden flashes.

Now a silence fell upon our men ; the tongues that had wagged so freely hitherto were still. The intensity of the bombardment now in

progress awed and appalled us, and on every hand were evidences of the stern nature of the conflict which we were about to enter. The roadside was strewn with corpses: at intervals of every few yards they lay awaiting burial. Some doubtless had died on their way to the dressing station, and had been deposited there by the stretcher-bearers that these last might return at once to the service of the living. Others had been killed by shells at the spot where they now lay. The grey uniform of the German lay side by side with the khaki of the Britisher. . . .

A dead horse and its rider lay in the middle of the road in a wide pool of blood. Wherever one looked were dead horses. . . .

And still the wounded streamed by in silent procession.

A halt was called—the last prior to our going into action. We established ourselves in a series of newly dug man-holes (like shallow graves) that stretched in a line between the road and the wood.

Darkness fell. But in every direction it was riven by yellow flashes of light: and the air was thunderous with the incessant roaring of guns and bursting of shells. The forward horizon was aflare as far as eye could see: at points innumerable and ever changing there were

volcanic bursts of savage flame in ceaseless succession: all up and down the long battle front the glare in the sky flickered and danced, was here vivid and there faint, but was unbroken. And in this warmly luminous upper air a myriad star-shells winked in and out, soared and drifted and fell, like so many green rush-lights.

The spectacle was as magnificent as, to the imaginative eye, it was full of terror. Fascinated we lay in the strangely troubled dark and watched this fantastic demoniac revel of light, the roar of the guns still surging through the air in a shattering devil's tattoo.

Then the order was given to fall in, and we went forward into action.

THE BIG PUSH.

III.

IN ACTION.

JULY 14TH-15TH, 1916.

High Wood was in our hands! The Germans had been cleared from it that day!

So we had been informed. And now the leading platoon was marching in single file along the outskirts of the wood, the others following at discreet intervals. Ever and anon an enemy shell came screeching into the wood, and the roar of its explosion was accompanied by the sharp sounds of the rending and splitting of trees, and of the crashing of their fall.

In silence for the most part the men trudged along in the darkness that was disturbed by the flicker of light from the distant bursting shells, but every little while came a questioning whisper, "I wonder where old Fritz is? Where's the front line? No sign of it here."

Then—suddenly—without warning—the darkness of the wood was broken by a score of tongues of flame: and the noise of the artillery and shell-bursts was drowned in the splitting roar of rifles and machine guns fired at close range. And the air was full of flying, hissing bullets.

For an instant our fellows stood paralysed. One fell and lay moaning: another dropped to his knees, then pitched forward and lay dumb and still. A voice, hoarse with some kind of passion, rang out, "Get down, men, get down!" And all threw themselves on the ground, crouching low as they might, and waited in blind wonderment for what seemed an endless time, while they sought by a sort of instinctive prayer to gain mastery over the fear that was in their hearts. And ever the streaming bullets swished over and about them with the sound of a scythe swung fiercely among hay: and ever a moan came from out the darkness at some new point —or a mad, stabbing cry—or a sobbing gasp that told a life was finished.

"Dig yourself in and don't expose yourself!"

The order passed from lip to lip, and entrenching tools were got out. With feverish quickness the men began to dig, though daring hardly to raise their bodies from the ground. A few carried proper spades and, on their knees

and crouching low, threw up the earth with a passionate energy. Each man knew that he was digging for dear life, and breathed more freely when he had scraped away enough of the earth's surface to afford him some protection from the perpetually menacing bullets.

The battalion stretched now across and through the narrow wood: some platoons being in the open on the left of it, others in the wood itself, and others on the right. All were digging themselves in with that tireless impetuosity occasioned only by pressing danger. It was, however, the company on the right of the wood, that which had first advanced, which sustained the heaviest casualties during the night: at other parts of our line there was almost complete freedom from enemy annoyance, and the men there had no idea that their pals, only a short distance off, were paying so heavy a toll. But in that harassed company, all through the hours of dreadful darkness, man after man, officer after officer, continued to fall. The task of the stretcher-bearers in conveying the wounded to the rear was as dangerous and difficult an one as may be conceived, but quietly and unflinchingly they "carried on," and some there were who paid their debt to Duty with their lives.

. . . . . .

The infinite weariness of that night! Time seemed to have been suspended: the moments dropped slowly and fitfully: the minutes dragged out into interminable hours. And still the sniper's bullet stirred the air with the sound of a twanging, tautened wire: or a sudden storm of bullets would sweep overhead, with awful menace in its rush: and still the tale of dead and wounded grew.

All longed for the coming of the day, though they knew it might bring with it other and worse horrors. But the dread of the dark was on them —this darkness shot with dancing light, and thick with death and pain.

The officers moved about, encouraging and cheering the men with brave words, and themselves exhibiting a marvellous calmness of demeanour and contempt of danger. And ever and again the Commanding Officer would appear at each part of the line, walking upright and fearless, and in his voice was always that note of confidence and of comradely sympathy that never failed to put fresh heart into our fellows when they were in a tight corner. Everything was all right if only the Colonel were with them: he'd never let them down: he knew the game of soldiering through and through, and he knew and understood his men: he made them feel

that he was one of themselves—and always he did his utmost and best for them. A rare chap, the Colonel! So the boys thought and reasoned.

Once the C.O. started to move forward from our line towards the hidden Germans. Our men called to him not to go farther, as the danger was great. He paused for a moment.—"It's all right, boys," he said kindly. "I've got to go forward a little way—it's to help you. I'll come back." Then he strode on, two other officers and his faithful batman following close on his heels.

And yet again he stood sadly regarding two still forms that lay at his feet.—"Poor boys!" he said in a tone of infinite pity: "poor boys!" —and turned away.

. . . . . .

In rear of High Wood, and near to Mametz Wood, was a place where the road passed between two ridges, and along this valley the wounded had to travel to reach the principal dressing stations. (The Battalion dressing station was in a shell hole just behind our trenches, and there the Battalion Medical Officer, Captain J. P. Charles, R.A.M.C., wet with blood and sweat, was working with an energy and intensity almost superhuman in his attendance on the wounded—and this despite the fact that he

himself was badly wounded in the leg very early in the action. For more than twelve hours he was too busy saving lives to bother about his own hurt: and he "carried on" grimly until he himself, in a state of physical collapse, but vigorously protesting his ability to "carry on" still further, was carried out on a stretcher—and so to hospital.)

But to return to Death Valley,—as this place became known to our men: and that night did it merit its dread name. Out of the darkness, from every side, came thin cries of anguish and lamentation, and low pitiful moanings, and voices of men raised in passionate appeal for help or in a weary plaint for water to drink: and now and again a shriek of direst agony rent the air, breaking off as suddenly as it had begun.

Many of the wounded, from a dozen different regiments, with a mad eagerness to get away from the horrors of High Wood and its environs, had dragged themselves hither and had then collapsed, unable to go farther. Now they lay in the darkness, overcome by weakness and pain, awaiting the succour that seemed so long in coming, the cries of the other unfortunates increasing the tension of their already overwrought nerves. Others stumbled along in the dark seeking the sanctuary of the farther dressing

stations;—some with an immense relief in their minds, a surging gladness in their hearts, that they were going to be "out of it" for a time: —some staggering blindly, aimlessly, forward, dazed and distraught with pain and weakness.

Moving about in the darkness, guided by the cries and groans, were other men eager and alert to help their wounded comrades: dressing their wounds, quenching their intolerable thirst, guiding and supporting and carrying them towards the Field Ambulances.

. . . . . .

At long and weary last the eastern sky was shot with pearly grey: then the curtain of darkness slowly lifted and light came flooding over the land.

The Glasgows crouched low in their shallow ditch and wondered what was to happen now. A feeling was abroad that they would have to go "up and over" and clear the wood at the point of the bayonet, and all hoped that it might be so. Action was what they wanted — the chance to do something. At one part of our line our fellows saw Germans moving about in the farther recesses of the wood, and for an hour or two our snipers—who naturally comprised every man who could see a target—put in some really successful work: as did also the Lewis Guns.

And then—soon after nine o'clock in the morning, and when somehow they were not expecting it, for their thoughts were on a breakfast of bully and biscuit—the order came to go "up and over." They were to clear the wood and go on to a certain point beyond it.

For a quarter of an hour our artillery rained shells on the corner of the wood that held the Germans, and on the enemy's supports. And our men jested among themselves. The tension was over: they were going to get their own back now: they had stormed a Boche stronghold before, and had come out "laughing:" this might be a sterner job, but the Glasgows could do it if anyone could. . . . There was discussion arising from surmise as to the disposal of the remainder of the Brigade and Division, as to which battalions would be acting in concert, and then——

"Up!—over you go, men!"

And they were on the surface of the ground and running forward.

A withering blast of machine gun fire met them almost at once, and many stumbled and fell ere they had gone more than a few yards. But the others trotted on—throwing themselves down full length at intervals to regain breath and secure cover, and by a vigorous rapid fire

to cover the advance of another section of the line.

The difficulties of those within the wood were tremendous: the undergrowth was so thick that progress was almost an impossibility.

A terrific fire of shrapnel was now playing as well upon the advancing line: in ones and twos and threes the men were falling.

On the left flank a Subaltern — the only officer left of his company—rallied his men and urged them on: then he too suddenly pitched forward and lay still. Immediately a young Sergeant jumped forward and took his place at the head of the line—such a thin, scattered line —and shouted, "Come on, you fellows: keep in line—close up—go easy in front. . . . Down!" They lay panting for a few moments, thankful if they had the protection of a clump of grass or a cluster of nettles.—"For-ward!" shouted the little Sergeant and jumped to his feet. He took two paces forward, then spun sharply round on his heels and fell headlong as a bullet crashed through his brain. And a Lance-Jack leapt forward and put himself at the head of the company.

The farthest advanced had gone barely two hundred yards, and only a few were left, widely scattered. Many were isolated and were crawling

on hands and knees and dodging from shell hole to shell hole for essential cover: yet always advancing. But now they saw their effort was vain: their fighting strength was spent, they were a mere handful and leaderless: the one duty that remained was to retire whence they had come.

As best they might they started to crawl back to their trenches: yet there were some who were unable to do that because they occupied positions particularly exposed, and they were constrained to remain there in the open, hiding in such shell holes as they might, for many long and anxious hours.

The remnant of the battalion, on reaching their former trenches, and being reinforced by the men of another unit, again took up the task of "holding the line." As the long hours of the day wore on, stragglers—those who had been cut off—continued to arrive, and each brought a tale of other pals lying wounded and dead "out yonder." It was impossible to reach them and bring them back then, although many volunteered to make the attempt. When night fell, a party was sent out to bring back such of the wounded as were at all accessible: and lives were saved thus—and others were lost in the work of salvation.

. . . . . .

Early on the morning of Sunday, 16th July, the battalion was relieved and marched back to a place close to Mametz Wood. The men straggled down, weary and spiritless, a ghastly pallor showing through the tan of their faces, with wide, nervous, sleepless eyes and drooping bodies. And their minds were gloomy with the thought of those pals who had gone and with the horror of the whole situation: and they spake few words among themselves.

The Glasgows had been hard hit! How hard was only realised when in the course of the day a roll-call was taken, and it was found that of those who had marched up to High Wood with so brave a step less than two days before, barely a fourth were now present to answer to their names.

The C.O. surveyed the handful of men that was left to him, and in his eyes was the light of a great pity and sorrow. And, in the midst of their own woes, the men felt it in their hearts to be sorry for him, for they knew—none better—how great had been his pride in his battalion. Talking to a Brigade Officer he was heard to say in reference to those who had fallen—"Six hundred of the best soldiers that ever wore the King's uniform:" then, with a sudden note of bitterness, "I wish to God the honour had been mine to go West with them!"

But in his speech with the men there was always the note of confidence and encouragement :—" It's the fortune of war, men ! We've had a stroke of bad luck, but we mustn't complain : our turn will come again. And there's no blame attached to you—you've done nobly. Everybody is proud of the Glasgows." So he told a little group of men with whom he stopped to speak, and a few days later he expressed himself in similar terms to the assembled battalion.*

A day or two the battalion remained in the precincts of Mametz Wood, and while there the casualty list received fresh additions ; but reinforcements of officers and men arrived, and again the Glasgows, almost at full strength, moved into the forefront of the battle line.

* Lieut.-Col. John Collier Stormonth-Darling, D.S.O., who was in command of the Glasgow Highlanders at the time of which I write, was himself killed in action about three months later—on November 1st, 1916. It were almost impossible to convey the measure of the sense of loss experienced by the Glasgows at his death. No battalion commander was ever more beloved of his men : their admiration for him as a gallant soldier and courteous gentleman amounted to veneration. His first thought was ever for the welfare and comfort of his troops, and in his endeavours to ensure those he spared himself not at all. His manner of life was Spartan in its simplicity, and when the battalion was in circumstances particularly dangerous or nerve-racking or arduous, he was ever at hand, sharing the lot of his troops, and encouraging them with those words of comradely sympathy and cheer that won for him the affection of every man in his unit. At all times his soldierly bearing was an example and an inspiration to his men : and these regarded him not merely as their revered leader and commander, but as one of their best personal friends.

A battalion may be shattered, but it cannot die: its greatness, its very life, resides only in the spirit that imbues it. As the traditions of a regiment become richer, so does its efficiency increase: the greater its death-roll, the more abundant the life that it possesses. For the dead still fight in the ranks: their spirit has entered into and made strong the souls of those who wield the rifles to-day.

The Glasgows nobly died.

Nobly the Glasgows carry on.

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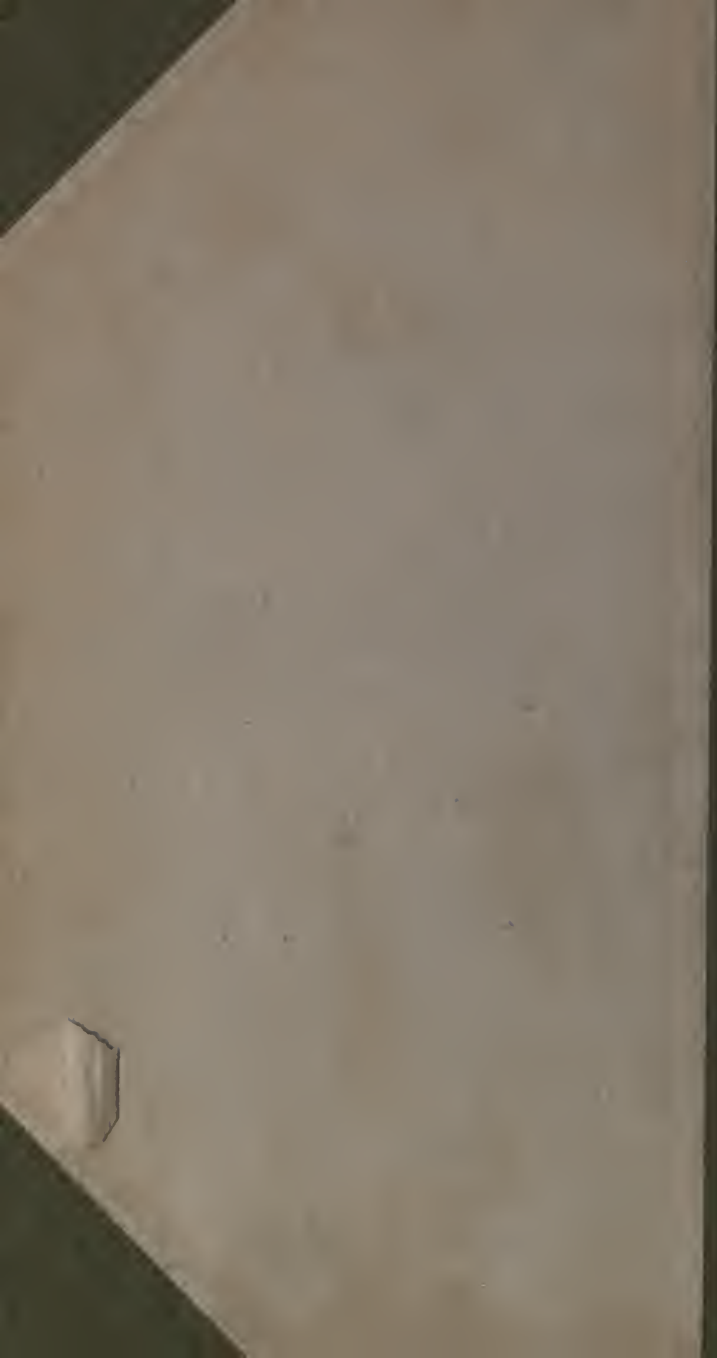
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